

Thesis on

THE LOCAL BAPTIST CONFESSIONS OF FAITH

OF THE CIVIL WAR--COMMONWEALTH PERIOD:

A Study of Their Origins, Contents, and

Significance

by

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FOREWORD

This thesis is a study of all the known Baptist Confessions of the Civil War-Commonwealth Period. No period has been so productive of Baptist declarations of faith as the years 1640-1650, This was chiefly due to the course of political events and to the unique position in which these events placed the Baptists in Britain. The propriety of the term "local" in connection with these Confessions might seem questionable; but as used in this study, the term refers to the "Associations" or groups of churches of limited areas which produced the Confessions, and not to single local churches. The last of the Confessions of the series represented churches of a far larger area than did the others, but these churches were but a part of the General Baptist section of the Baptist family, and most of them were located in the London area. In a partative rather than a strictly geographical sense, however, this Confession too was local.

There has been very little modern work done on these Confessions. Indeed, a thorough study of no one of them seems ever to have been undertaken. In 1854 Underhill included three of the eight in his Confessions of Faith, prefacing his work with an eleven-page introduction to the general subject of seventeenth century Baptist Confessions and to the larger events affecting Baptists in that century. McGlothlin collected four of the Confessions in his codex of 1911, Baptist Confessions of Faith. With each he included a few notes on backgrounds, with an occasional remark on contents. In a British edition of this work the Baptist Historical Society included a copy of an additional Confession, that of 1655, in the introduction. The same Society published the Welsh General Baptist Confes-

sion in its Transactions (1909) with a few partly accurate remarks by Champlin Burrage; and the Welsh Baptist Historical Society published An Antidote against the Infection of the Times, with an identifying introductory note, in the same year.

My first task was to find all extant Confessions of the period. Only three (the 1644, 1656, and 1660 Confessions collected by Underhill) could be seen in Edinburgh, and one of them was a copy of a later edition. During a term spent at Oxford copies of the Confessions of 1651, of 1656, and of the Welsh General Baptists were secured, and numerous other original sources were consulted. The unknown Confession of 1654 was located during a week of work in the British Museum, London. Search for other Confessions was also made in Dr. William's Library, the Sion College Library, and the Baptist Church-house Library, all in London, at this time. A visit to the Baptist College at Bristol was not rewarded by finding a new Confession, but by securing valuable information concerning the Confession of 1656. Finally, An Antidote against the Infection of the Times was obtained through a visit to the National Library, Aberystwyth, Wales, and identified as a Confession of Faith. Later a second visit was made to Bristol in search of needed materials, and still later, it was found necessary to return to the British Museum. On this final visit to London I found the Lincolnshire Confession which is treated in Appendix C.

Three aspects of the subject have been treated: the origins, the contents, and the significance of the Confessions. The first Chapter is concerned entirely with the first aspect, though not with the immediate origins of each Confession. In it I have sought to

trace the main lines of thought and influence which found expression in early British Baptist life, and in the Confessions of 1644-1660 in particular. The second Chapter is concerned with a single Confession, the earliest and most important of the period. Six associational Confessions form a unit and are considered in Chapter III. The Confession of 1660 eventually represented most of the General Baptist churches of England and so was important enough to warrant separate attention in Chapter IV. The origins, contents, and significance of each Confession have been considered separately, and because of the nature of the Confessions, the origins have usually been given most space. It has not been possible to study the contents of any Confession as thoroughly as desired, but the outstanding features of each have been selected for special attention. Indeed, an entire thesis might be written on the contents of each of several of the Confessions, and only the necessary limitations of length of this thesis have prevented more elaborate discussions on contents. The final Chapter is concerned with a summary of contents of the Confessions treated as a unit, and with a statement of the significance of the Confessions of the period.

As a matter of convenience, I have often identified a Confession by its date. This has been possible because each of the English Confessions appeared in a different year. The Welsh Confessions have never been identified by their dates alone.

American spelling has been used throughout the thesis.

Unsigned articles from the quarterly of the British Baptist Historical Society, of which I have made rather extensive use, have usually been the work of Dr. W. T. Whitley.

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CHAPTER I

RELIGIOUS BACKGROUNDS OF EARLY ENGLISH BAPTIST THOUGHT

I. Native Elements in the English Reformation

Whatever reforming influences came from the Continent, it is certain that the English Reformation had its roots in the native soil. To understand its beginnings one must go back at least to Wycliff and the Lollards. Both Wycliffism and Lollardy, while not identical in themselves, were protests against prevailing ecclesiastical corruptions, and they had as one of their prime objectives the placing of the vernacular Scriptures in the hands of the people.

^{1.} Elliott-Binns names as the five native religious causes of the Reformation in England the Lollard Movement of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, Wycliff's writings, the circulation of the Scriptures in the vernacular, the witness of martyrs (heretics), and a deep anti-clerical feeling.

Probably none of these elements named by Elliott-Binns was more foundational than the thinking and writing of Wycliff. He could hardly have expected many men of his day to see as clearly as he saw the supreme importance of man's individual relation to God, or to comprehend with him the enormity of the abuses which encumbered and largely nullified the Gospel in his land. All that he said and did, however, was based upon "the affirmation that in the innermost of life man must derive all he is direct from God. From the leading of that affirmation he never broke away to run in paths where it did not show the way."^{2.}

1. The Reformation in England, pp. 28-36.

2. Clark, History of English Nonconformity, Vol. 1, p. 68.

The idea of "dominion" or "lordship" so possessed him, indeed, that by a devious process of scholastic reasoning he came to the conclusion that the Church must have a custodian on earth, and that custodian must be the State. This was a denial of a later Nonconformist principle; yet in Wycliff the Nonconformist spirit found its earliest and perhaps purest expression. As Pollard says,

"The views of the English reformers approach so much more nearly to those of Wycliffe than to those of Luther that the Englishman rather than the German must be regarded as the morning star of the Anglican Reformation." 1.

Nor was the influence of Wycliff confined to England. John Huss of Bohemia took up his work on the basis of the principles enunciated by Wycliff, --

"... so that from Wycliff to Huss, from Huss to Luther, and from Luther back to Wycliff's England again, the line can easily be drawn. Wycliff was great enough to mould in no inconsiderable degree a movement that came to its fruition more than a century after his death." 2.

Wycliff left behind him no organized system, and so no uninterrupted progression of his ideas can be traced. Organization was secondary with him; he was chiefly interested in the spiritual source. Had he founded a Church, lesser men who followed him might have had something to which they might hold; but he did not. He did inspire a Lollardy which, while hardly reproducing some of his great ideas, yet kept others alive until Reformation days. Lollardy at least continued the protest against elaborate superstition and unnecessary form in religion, and stood for a genuine piety. Lollardy was at first most widespread in

1. Thomas Cranmer and the English Reformation, p. 14.
 2. Clark, op. cit., p. 77.

Leicestershire, but soon it flourished in London and the West. Fundamental to the Lollards was the love of the English Bible; with them everything had to be tested by the Scriptures. Thus we hear of their opposition to "images and pilgrimages, mass and monks, prayers to saints and the use of oaths, war and capital punishment."¹ Driven underground by ecclesiastical and political forces, time and again Lollardy would reappear and revive, as, for example, during the reign of Henry VII. In many of its old strongholds it never relinquished its hold. In these same localities later were to be found some of the most stubborn centers of Anabaptists and pronounced Puritans, and later still, of Separatists and Baptists. As Curtis says, "the national mind was far from idle"² in the interval of a century and a half between the publication of Wycliff's Twelve Theses against Transubstantiation and the actual institution of the English Reformation. In the Universities, at least, Wycliff's thought was not allowed to perish.

One other native element in the religious reformation of England which deserves special attention was the influence of Tyndale's translation of the Scriptures and of his other writings. Tyndale was assisted and influenced by Luther, but he was an English reformer long before he met Luther. From his printing press at Cologne, and later (1525) at Worms, came the Scriptures in the vernacular English, without which the Reformation in England

1. Whitley, Minutes of the General Assembly, Vol. 1, p. xii.

2. A History of the Creeds and Confessions of Faith in Christendom and Beyond, p. 154.

would hardly have been possible. Because these Scriptures did come into the hands of the people, Henry VIII was practically forced to license English Bibles for publication during his reign (in 1538), and it followed that at the death of Matthew Parker they became actually available for private reading. "The dream of Erasmus was at last realized. A translation of the Bible had appeared which the weaver might repeat at his shuttle and the ploughman might in-^{1.} tone at the plough." Gradually the English people became a people of one book, the Bible. Then, Tyndale's great original work, The Obedience of a Christian Man, is not to be forgotten, nor the fact that Tyndale placed numerous reprints of Wycliff's tracts in the hands of his countrymen.^{2.} Had he been allowed personally to lead a reform movement, the Reformation there might have taken place much sooner.

When, at length, the Reformation did come to Britain -- the result of both native and continental elements, as we shall see -- one branch of the English Reformation family which appeared was made up of the people called Baptists. Were the Baptists, in any direct sense, a product of the native elements which have been named? It is evident they were. Burnet remarks that between the followers of Wycliff and the later Baptists "there was a greater identity than is generally admitted...."^{3.} Concerning this identity Brown speaks at some length:

"Whether or not Wycliff denied infant baptism, he was the first

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1. Gregory, Puritanism in the Old World and in the New, p. 16.
 2. Clark, op. cit., Vol. 1, p. 98 fn.
 3. History of the Reformation, Book 1, p. 24.

reformer of any note who, in England, opposed the corruptness of the papacy with any degree of success, and it is certain that he was the first to spread those doctrines among the English which would tend to overthrow the practice of baptizing infants that would in its turn lead ultimately to the present-day Baptist position. It seems safe to say that although Wycliff was far from a Baptist, he was the first great harbinger of Baptist principles." 1.

Concerning Tyndale, Brown says that some have held him to have been a Baptist,

"... and though it is incapable of proof, it is true that he shared many views held by Baptists. ... That Tyndale was not far from the later Baptist position is seen by an examination of his views. He held to [sic] a local congregation of a church and only two officers in a church -- pastor and deacon. He believed that baptism does not wash away sin and in order to avail must include repentance, faith, and confession. Baptism was considered by him as a 'plunging into the water,' and the church must consist of believers only." 2.

It is even more evident, however, that for the sources of Baptist life we must look to the Scriptures in the vernacular and to the rise of questions concerning the Church upon popular use of these Scriptures. Clark insists that the forerunners and parents of modern Baptists are to be found only

"in the line of certain more or less obscure people who, from Wyclif's time and perhaps from a yet earlier period, objected to having their children baptized after the customary rule of the Church." 3.

II. Calvinism in the English Reformation

Even after all the native elements in the English Reformation have been sought and weighed, it must be concluded that the native

1. Brown, Harold, "The History of the Baptists in England to 1644," The Chronicle, January, 1945, pp.3-4.

2. Ibid.

3. Clark, op. cit., Vol. 1, p. 128.

Reformation was sadly weak. Its origins had been noble, but the desire for reform had never found organized expression, despite "tentative" efforts to bring it about. That the early movement never, in its own strength, became articulate was probably largely due to the lack of strong and passionate leadership. No outstanding man, like Luther, was there to organize and direct. The religious impulse became enveloped in political struggle. It had to be rescued, reactivated, and enlarged by influences from outside England. Many leaders of the English Church welcomed these foreign impulses, but each impulse had to win its own place against heavy opposition on the English scene. Early reforming influences from the Continent seem to have reached England in three successive waves. The first was Lutheran, beginning in the reign of Henry VIII; the second was Zwinglian, beginning in the reign of Edward VI with the return of native exiles; and the third was Calvinist, belonging to the reign of Elizabeth when again exiles were returning home following, in this case, the persecutions of Mary.

As soon as the Reformation began in England there was a ready exchange of thought between that country and Germany, the source of the continental Reformation. As early as 1536 there was published for the use of the English a pamphlet of fourteen pages entitled, A Compendious letter from Iohn Pomerane (Bugenhagius) curate of the congregation at Wittenberge sent to the (faythfull christen) congregation in England.^{1.} Many such publications reached England at an

1. Burrage, C., The Early English Dissenters, Vol. 1, p. 69.

early date. English students began to make their way to German schools and Lutheran professors appeared in the English Universities. From Scotland came Lutheran reformers in the persons of Alesius, McAlphin, Macchabeus, Fidelis, Willock, and Spottiswood. Tracts of Luther and Wycliff were circulated by a society called the "Christian Brethren," some of its members being found even at Oxford and Cambridge.^{1.} Lutheranism, thus, as it won its way in England, absorbed the existing Protestant element into itself, offering a logically reasoned system and some organization. So through Luther the Continent gave back to England what the Continent had received from England years before.^{2.} Still, the extent of the Lutheran influence on England was not great. The reform movement under Henry VIII was little more than a quasi-Reformation, so much of its interest being other than purely religious. Henry's careful parleying with the German Protestant Princes scarcely concealed his distrust of the Lutheran heresy. Yet he had to go part of the way with the heresy, and to the coming to England of some of its official representatives has been traced "a considerable part of the present Articles of the Church of England."^{3.}

With the coming of the parenthetic period during the reign of Edward VI, the Zwinglian influence replaced the Lutheran. George Wishart, a Scot who had been exiled in Switzerland, returned, like many other British exiles, to England. In 1542 he came as a student to Cambridge, but remained to teach. The Reformation emphasis in

1. Clark, op. cit., Vol. 1, p. 74.

2. Ibid., p. 93.

3. Ibid., p. 112.

England gradually changed from that of Lutheranism favoring the inclusion in religious practice of any things not forbidden in Scripture to the Zwinglian emphasis on the inclusion of only that which is specifically prescribed in Scripture. The strength of Zwinglian sentiments was reflected in the supposition of many people, prior to the appearance of the Prayer Book, that Cranmer maintained a purely commemorative view of the Lord's Supper, and in their disappointment^{1.} when another view was set forth. With the Prayer Book as with many other things ecclesiastical in this period, decisions were largely dictated by political expediency. Foreign theologians, however, especially Martin Bucer and Peter Martyr, exercised a genuine reforming influence in most of the period of Edward's reign.

Following the Catholic reaction under Mary, continental reforming influences became stronger, though it can hardly be said that they met with a more enthusiastic reception on the part of the Sovereign in England. Elizabeth too was playing a cautious game. The third wave of continental influence was strongly Calvinistic. While it was distinctive, it is not to be thought of as separate from the other waves. There were no sharp lines of division among them; nor did Calvinism ever have the field to itself. But the entrance of Calvinism was not to be denied. Bayne says, "Calvin exercised a more potent and penetrating influence upon the mind of Europe, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, than any other man, Luther not excepted."^{2.} Calvin's doctrines had arrived in England early. In the

1. Clark, op. cit., Vol. 1, p. 132.

2. English Puritanism, Its Character and History, p. 8.

sixty years between 1550 and 1610 Calvinism succeeded in becoming the orthodox faith of the country, -- as witness the Ninth, Tenth, and Seventeenth Articles of the Church of England at the present day. The beginnings of this success are seen when we compare the earliest English Articles (the Ten Articles of 1536), and the Forty-two Articles of Edward VI, of 1553. The former, "devised by the Kyng's Highnes Majestie to stablyshe Christen quietnes and unitie among us, and to avoyde contentious opinions," were, says Curtis, "eloquent of the divided state of religious thought in England," and he quotes Fox as characterizing them, on account of their extreme conservatism, as "intended for 'weaklings newly weaned from their mother's milk of Rome'".^{1.} Of the latter, on the other hand, it could be said that they

"incline rather to the Reformed or Swiss than to the Lutheran type of doctrine. In reference to the doctrine of the Sacraments and of Scripture they are Reformed, not Lutheran, denying the ubiquity of the eternal body of Christ. ... On Election and Predestination they occupy a prudent position, compatible with either type, passing over in silence the problems of the relation of God's all-embracing decrees to the loss of the non-elect or the reprobate. ... It is absurd ... to deny the Calvinism of the Articles on this subject; but for Calvinistic influence and example they would not have discussed the subject at all. They go further than any contemporary formula, and much further, e.g., than the later Scots Confession of John Knox in 1560." ^{2.}

Calvin himself, as he said, always had an eye to the condition of Britain. His greatest influence, however, was through his associates and pupils. Among these were Martin Bucer, Paul Fagius,^{3.} Peter Martyr, and Bernard Ochino, all teaching in the Universities. Thomas Cartwright, expelled from his University post, went to Geneva,

1. History of Creeds and Confessions of Faith, p. 166.

2. Ibid., p. 176.

3. Dakin, Calvinism, pp. 166-167.

whence he diffused presbyterian ideas to England. John Knox was at Edward's court; and Martyr and Bucer were asked to help in the preparation of the second Prayer Book.¹ From the exile group also came the Genevan Bible, a family Bible with rather elaborate Calvinistic notes. This work went through no less than one hundred and forty editions before 1644, found acceptance everywhere in England and Scotland, and became the authorized Version in the latter.² Two important works also appeared in 1561. The first, published "according to the Queenes Maiesties Iniunctions," was entitled,

The Confession of the Faythe and Doctrine beleued and professed, by the Protestantes of the Realme of Scotlande, exhibited to the estates of the same in parliament, and by their publicke voices authorized as a doctrine, grounded upon the infallible worde of God.

The other bears the title A Confession of Fayth, made by common consent of diuers reformed churches beyonde the Seas: with an Exhortation to the Reformation of the Churche.³ These came into the hands of many thoughtful Englishmen during the next twenty to thirty years, and they were evidence of the growing importance of Calvinistic teachings. The popularity of Calvinism among the English had been accentuated during the Marian persecution when the exiles, during their stay on the Continent, "were treated with kindness and cordiality by the Calvinists, with coldness by the Lutherans"⁴; so that at the beginning of Elizabeth's reign there was a strong feeling on the part of leaders in the Church of England in favor of completing the Reformation to the point of bringing the ceremonies and ritual into

1. Clark, op. cit., Vol. 1, p. 135.

2. Dakin, Calvinism, pp. 166-167.

3. Burrage, op. cit., Vol. 1., pp. 78-79.

4. Bayne, op. cit., p. 8.

approximate agreement with those of the Calvinistic Churches. Thus the doctrines of Calvin came to be regarded as standard.

Calvinism had been challenged in English Protestant circles, however, as early as 1550. In that year, following a lecture by Prebendary Turner of Isleworth on Original Sin and Baptism, a controversy between him and Robert Cooke took place. Cooke attacked all the novel points stressed by Calvin, and soon published a pamphlet, The Confutation of the Errors of the Careless by Necessity, in which he argued especially against the dogmas:

1. 'God hath not created all men to be saved by any means, but before the foundation of the world he hath chosen a certain number to salvation, which is but a small flock; and the rest which be innumerable, he hath reprobated and ordained to condemnation: because it pleaseth him'; and
2. 'The elect, though they sin grievously, yet are they never out of the favour and election of God, neither can they by any means perish: again, the reprobate were never in the favour and election of God, neither could they attain unto salvation.' 1.

This pamphlet, from one who had been at the court of Queen Katherine Parr, attracted so much attention that it drew an answer from John Knox, then in Geneva.² A year later, Calvin's Institutes were translated from the Latin edition of 1559 into English, and sent immediately to England.³ Soon the Calvinism of the notes of the Genevan Bible were intensified by Beza and a revision appeared and found its way into British Universities, homes, and churches. The first open dissent from Calvinism came from an unexpected quarter, from a pupil of Calvin, Peter Baro. Baro had come from Geneva to Cambridge in 1574 as lecturer in divinity. Ten years later, one of his pupils,

1. Quoted in Whitley, Calvinism and Evangelism, pp. 3-4.
 2. Whitley, Calvinism and Evangelism, pp. 3-4.
 3. Ibid.

Samuel Harsnett, preached a sermon against absolute predestination which was censured by Archbishop Whitgift. Harsnett and another Cambridge man, Launcelot Andrewes, quickly became the nucleus of a new school of thought.^{1.}

In 1595, a lecturer at Cambridge published, in a highly Calvinistic style, an exposition of the Creed, which was challenged by a student in a sermon. Baro upheld the challenge. Whitgift was appealed to and he, at length, came out with nine Articles which were approved in an informal meeting of several bishops at Lambeth. All the heads of colleges were told to sign these Articles. The order was resented as a trespass on the authority of the University, and the Queen rebuffed Whitgift for holding the Lambeth meeting at all. Baro then attacked the Lambeth Articles on doctrinal grounds, and in consequence lost his position. The Articles had no "technical" authority, but divines at Cambridge almost unanimously subscribed to them. Among the Articles were the following:

1. 'God from eternity has predestined some persons to life, and reprobated others to death.'
2. 'The moving or efficient cause to predestination to life is not foreseen faith or good works, or any other commendable quality in the persons predestined, but the good will and pleasure of God.'
3. 'The number of the predestinate is fixed, and cannot be lessened or increased.'^{2.}

But Baro declared:

1. 'God created all men to eternal life, from which he rejects no man but on the account of his sins';
2. 'Christ died for all mankind, and was a propitiation for the sins of the whole world, original and actual...'; and
3. '...the promises of eternal life made to us in Christ are to be generally and universally taken and understood.'^{3.}

1. Whitley, Calvinism and Evangelism, pp. 3-4.
 2. Quoted in ibid., pp.5-6.
 3. Ibid.

In 1615 James I granted permission for a Convocation of the Church of Ireland. At this Convocation thoroughly Calvinistic Articles were prepared by James Ussher, professor of divinity at Dublin, and adopted. One said,

'God from all eternity did, by his unchanging counsel, ordain whatever in time should come to pass: yet as thereby no violence is offered to the wills of the reasonable creatures, and neither the liberty nor the contingency of the second causes is taken away, but established rather.'

Another said,

'By the same eternal counsel, God hath predestined some unto life, and reprobated some unto death: of both which there is a certain number known only to God, which can neither be increased nor diminished.'

Article 3 deals with God's eternal decree and predestination, and we see its language again in the Westminster Confession.

First the Irish Parliament and then King James approved these Irish Articles.^{1.}

Four years after the Irish Convocation the doctrine of Calvin was challenged in the Netherlands by Arminius, and the Synod of Dort was summoned, to which were invited representatives of several Reformed Churches. King James, something of a theologian himself and an ardent Calvinist, sent five divines, whom he advised, however, not to oppose the doctrine of universal redemption. They sought a compromise and offered for adoption a formula including:

'absolute intention for the elect, conditional intention for the reprobate in case they do believe; that all men should be saveable despite the fall of Adam; that Jesus Christ did not only die sufficiently for all, but God did intend in giving of Christ, and Christ in giving himself did intend

1. Whitley, Calvinism and Evangelism, pp.5-6.

to put all men into a state of salvation in case they do believe.' 1.

This formula did not win acceptance, and the British representatives accepted the Confession of the Synod. The Church of England was not bound by the decisions at Dort, but its agreement with these conclusions indicates the general Calvinistic position of King and clergy at that time.

Arminian (or pre-Arminian) sentiments in England are heard of as early as the days of Edward VI; a fact which, as we shall see, must have been largely due to Anabaptist influence. Among the earliest Separatists there were some who strenuously objected to the doctrine of predestination.^{2.} Baro and his followers had been silenced, but gradually Arminian opinions became more common. "About 1624," Richard Montagu, one of the King's chaplains, was accused of reviving the opinions of Baro. In his Appeal to Caesar, written in opposition to a Catholic book, he was held to have departed from Calvinism in saying 'that men justified may fall away from grace, and may recover again, but not certainly or necessarily.'^{3.} By this time Arminian influences were strengthening. Their opportunity actually came during the reign of James I. The sudden change in Arminian fortunes was due to the work of Montagu, Mainwaring, Sibthorpe, and especially, Laud.^{4.} As the influence of Laud grew, Arminianism became more popular in court circles, and the High Church party came to favor it. It was not so with the Puritan party, which after 1620 adopted the

1. Whitley, Calvinism and Evangelism, pp.6-7.

2. Clark, op. cit., p. 141, and Evans, Early English Baptists, Vol. 1, pp.77-78 fn.

3. Whitley, supra, p. 8.

4. Evans, supra, p. 196.

Lambeth Articles as a kind of Confession of Faith,^{1.} and the 'Quinquar~~t~~icular Formula'^{2.} (of Dort) as one of its standards. Parliament was alarmed at the rise of Arminianism and named, in a remonstrance, Bishops Neile and Laud as the chief abettors of the heresy. Arminianism, said this remonstrance, is 'but a cunning way to bring in Popery....'^{3.} But Laud, when he had become Archbishop, secured from Charles I a declaration for the stifling of the Calvinistic controversy. This law prohibited all discussion on the disputed points, but it actually served as an instrument in the hands of those who favored the Arminian doctrine.^{4.} Thus, about 1620, a changed theological situation was to be seen in England. Thanks to the Genevan Bible, to other continental influences, and to the rising spirit of dissent, Calvinism had won the greater place among the people; but, between it and Arminianism the party lines had been clearly drawn. The High Church party favored Arminianism, and the Puritan party was wedded to Calvinism. The new King, Charles I, was under the influence of Laud and Andrewes, whose school "began to grow, though not by any means to displace Calvinism."^{5.}

It has been rightly urged that Calvinism and Evangelicalism (i.e., the Christian evangelistic and missionary passion) are the two lines of thought which converge to make modern dissent. "They emphasize at once the objectiveness of our religion and the direct contact that it gives between the soul and God"; and so

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1. Dorner, History of Protestant Theology, pp.49-50
 2. Green, The Christian Creed and the Creeds of Christendom, p.140.
 3. Price, History of Protestant Nonconformity in England, pp.31-32 fn. Vol.1.
 4. Ibid., pp.33-34.
 5. Whitley, Calvinism and Evangelism, p.8.

the two lines are "the two main currents in our thought...."^{1.} The spirit of Calvinism can certainly be seen leading through Puritanism, and eventually into Nonconformity. Puritanism's attitude toward life derives from Calvinism. This attitude could already be seen in the latter part of Elizabeth's reign. After the years of decision and crisis, a period of prosperity and expansion in the nation's life ensued, in which there was a sharp decline of morals. The best minds were aware of this condition. The old Puritanism with its concern about church forms and garments became transformed into a crusade against vice and immorality. This new^{2.} concern seemed even more pressing than the fight against Rome.

"They [the Puritans] desired that under the teachings of the Bible, interpreted as it was then through the medium of the Calvinistic theology, every Englishman should devote himself to the fulfilment of those duties in which they saw the worthy preparation for the life to come.... It was by its demand for a purer morality that Puritanism retained its hold upon the laity."^{3.}

^{4.} It must be remembered, as Clark says, that Nonconformity was not simply Protestantism. Had there been in England a movement such as Lutheranism in Germany, still the stage of Nonconformity would not have been obviated. Protestantism was concerned with the correction of abuses; Nonconformity was concerned with an entirely fresh exploration and reconstruction on thoroughly religious foundations. Nonconformity was a continuation of Protestantism, with both negative and positive sides, and it owed much to the Calvinism which found strong advocacy through it.

How does this affect the Baptists, who were in part, at

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1. Manning, B.L., "Our Inheritance in Faith and Practice," The Baptist Quarterly, Vol. 4 (1928-29), p.215.
 2. Dakin, op. cit., pp. 158-159.
 3. Gardiner, History of England, Vol. 3, p. 293.
 4. History of English Nonconformity, pp. 100-102, Vol. 1.

least by affirmation, not Calvinists at all? It would, indeed, seem that the Particular Baptists were far greater debtors to Calvin than the General Baptists. But were the General Baptists not also of the English Nonconformist stream? and was not that stream strongly colored by Calvinism? These questions must be answered affirmatively; but John Smyth must be encountered in answering them. He had been a clergyman and a Puritan. As a Separatist he became an exile to Holland in 1608. Theologically, he did not agree with most Separatists,^{1.} and Whitley thinks he learned his anti-Calvinism from Baro, the foreign teacher at Cambridge. He does not appear to have been, as a Separatist, a fully convinced Arminian, for his break with the exiled "Ancient Church" of Separatists was not occasioned, at least primarily, by his Arminianism; and it must be remembered that Arminianism was to most Separatists "heresy of the deepest dye."^{2.} It was his continued associations with the Arminian Dutch Anabaptists which hardened his convictions and soon led him openly to renounce the opinions of Calvin and to espouse those of Arminius. Yet his position is not to be considered as a thoroughgoing Arminianism so much as a protest against high-Calvinism. In 1610 he was saying, 'God created and redeemed the human race to his image, and predestined all men to life, reprobating nothing....'^{3.} Two years later he protested:

'Original sin is an idle term, and there is no such thing as man intended by the word.... As no man begetteth his child to the gallows, nor no potter maketh a pot to break it, so God doth not create nor predestinate any man to destruction....' ^{4.}

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1. Minutes of the General Assembly, Vol. 1, pp.xiii-xiv.
 2. Barclay, Inner Life of the Religious Societies, p. 68.
 3. Quoted in Whitley, Calvinism and Evangelism, p. 16.
 4. Ibid.

He reasoned,

'if original sin might have passed from Adam to his posterity, Christ's death stopped the issue and passage thereof; infants are conceived and born in innocency without sin, and so dying are undoubtedly saved.' 1.

The singular independence of Smyth's expression, his disregard for what Calvin or Augustine thought, may be traced to certain Separatist backgrounds, but also to Anabaptist influences. His church was with him in arriving at a position differing from that of the Anglican Articles (the Thirty-nine), and approaching that of Arminius. It is notable that his followers were, until the rise of the Quakers, the only important anti-Calvinistic group in English Separatism.

In Thomas Helwys, Smyth's successor in the leadership of the group which became the first English General Baptist Church, independence of thought was even more pronounced. It is likely that in London Helwys had seen Cooke's challenge to Calvinism, for he adopted some of Cooke's arguments and even some of his phrases. However, he went beyond Cooke in adding a new corollary. If Christ died to redeem all men, he said, agreeing with Smyth and the Anabaptists, then infants are never condemned. But, while he held that Christ died to save all men and not only certain elect persons, he rebelled against 'that most damnable heresie' of Free-will, which was supposed to be the "natural concomitant" of the doctrine of general election. John Robinson wrote of the views of Helwys:

'Mr. Helwys, elsewhere and rightly, disclaims all free will, or power in a man's self to work out his own salvation, but teacheth that 'this grace, which is his mercy in Christ, God hath given to all, though all receive it not'; That original

1. Quoted in Whitley, History of British Baptists, pp. 27-28

2. Vid. Whitley, "Thomas Helwys of Grey's Inn," The Baptist Quarterly, Vol. 7 (1934-35), pp. 249-250.

3. Burrage, The Early English Dissenters, Vol. 1, p. 253.

sin is an idle term, and that there is no such thing as men intended by the word; because God threatened death only to Adam, not to his posterity; and because God created the soul.' 1.

The truth is that modern Calvinism is not very different from the views of Smyth, and even more like those of Helwys and his company.^{2.}^{3.} Payne says the theology of the earliest General Baptists is better described as "pre-Calvinist" than as "anti-Calvinist." If, as has been said, Calvinism and Evangelicalism are the two streams which combined to form modern dissent, then the early Baptists uniquely deserve the name "the dissidence of dissent," for of their life the two streams were integral parts. The main lines of Baptist thought were going to continue to move along the direction of an evangelistic Calvinistic theology.

III. Anabaptism in the English Reformation

If we think of the native English reformatory elements and of early Calvinistic Separatism as the two streams of influence uniting to help form the Baptist movement in England, in addition to them, and probably at least equal with them in importance, we must name another stream emanating from the Continent -- Anabaptism. The Anabaptist movement was a child of the Reformation, combining in itself a medieval evangelicalism and a thoroughgoing reformationism. It appeared early in the sixteenth century in Switzerland in connection with the reform movement in that country, and its early leaders were able, and often well educated men. It began as an orderly attempt to conform the Church to the New Testament pattern, and so the real issue between it and the other Ref-

1. Quoted in Clark, op. cit., Vol 1, p. 189.
 2. Evans, op. cit., Vol. 1, p. 225 fn.
 3. The Fellowship of Believers, p. 15.

ormation movements was not baptism, but the question, what type of Church will replace the old Church?^{1.} "The reformers aimed to reform the old Church by the Bible; the radicals attempted to build a new Church from the Bible."^{2.} These Anabaptists, who got their name from their practice of re-baptizing those who having been baptized in infancy joined their movement, held that the New Testament Church is a voluntary community of individuals who have been transformed by the working of the Holy Spirit, in an experience of grace, and that baptism is "the symbol and seal of the faith of the regenerated."^{3.} From this followed the doctrines of the brotherhood of the baptized believers and the separation of the Church from the State and the world. The establishment of a pure Church of converts was their ideal and chief aim.

The other reformers despised Anabaptism because it cut exactly across some of the principles upon which they were attempting to effect an ecclesiastical and political reformation; but, as Brown says,

"Of all the forms of Protestantism to which the Reformation gave birth there was one, which more clearly than any other, carried to its logical conclusion the great principal that it is right for every man to seek God's truth in the Scriptures, and to mould his life in accordance with that truth as he sees it. When the great heroes of the Reformation found it expedient to put limitations on that principle, the people called Anabaptists clung to it still" 4.

Bitter persecution came early and continued; nearly all the leaders of the movement were slain; the name Anabaptist became in the eyes of the world a term of incomparable reproach. On the fringe

1. Smithson, The Anabaptists, pp. 14-15.

2. Schaff, The Swiss Reformation, Vol. 1, p. 71.

3. Smithson, supra.

4. Brown, Louise, Baptists and Fifth-Monarchy Men, pp. 1-2.

of the movement some social revolutionaries and fanatics -- made fanatical only by their savage persecution by other Christian groups, and by their consequently frustrated idealism -- gave themselves to insane excesses which brought to awful culmination the opprobrium in which the cause was held. Every heresy, insanity, and revolt of the age was soon labelled with the black name of Anabaptist.^{1.}

Yet, what were the ideas which characterized Anabaptism? Who can find them amid the mass of communism, millennialism, mysticism, adoptionism, and anarchy with which they are often found, and with which their enemies have ever been eager to class them? Only recently have historians begun to make unbiased search for the emphases and history of the movement. H. S. Burrage carefully names the following ideas as characteristic of the movement:

- "1. That the Scriptures are the only authority in matters of faith and practice.
2. That personal faith in Jesus Christ alone secures salvation; therefore infant baptism is to be rejected.
3. That a church is composed of believers who have been baptized on a personal confession of their faith in Jesus Christ.
4. That each has the entire control of its affairs without interference on the part of any external power.
5. That the outward life must be in accordance with such a confession of faith, and to this end it is essential that church discipline should be maintained.
6. That while the State may properly demand obedience in all things not contrary to the law of God, it has no right to set aside the dictates of conscience, and compel the humblest individual to surrender his religious views, or to inflict punishment in case such surrender is refused. Every human soul is directly responsible to God." 2.

These ideas at least characterized the early movement -- the "Seven Articles" of Michael Sattler (1527) are clear evidence^{3.} -- and after

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1. "... no other movement for spiritual freedom in the history of the Church has such an enormous martyrology." (Jones, R., Studies in Mystical Religion, p. 392.)
 2. The Anabaptists in the Sixteenth Century, p. 150.
 3. Payne, The Baptist Movement in the Reformation and Onwards, p. 12.

the conference at Buckholt in 1535 there was more general unanimity of doctrine and methods than is usually noted by those who speak of the Anabaptists.^{1.} Payne suggests that Hubmaier's The Christian Baptism of Believers, Reidemann's Rechenschaft, and Simons' Een Fondament "are perhaps the three treatises that best present Anabaptist doctrine."^{2.}

Anabaptism grew with amazing rapidity, in spite of persecution. It soon existed, in many forms, in every country in Christendom, and it was anticipated in the same manner in countries as far apart as Bohemia and England.^{3.} In Germany and in Holland Anabaptists found temporary refuge, and then lived on despite persecution. After the debacle at Munster, with which the great majority of Anabaptists had no connection whatever, Menno Simons, an ex-monk, gathered the leaderless people in Holland into communities. His followers were soon called Mennonites, and they began to tincture the life of the Netherlands and of other countries. These Mennonites remained true to the simple pietistic and pacifistic ideals of the earlier Swiss Brethren. Their coming to prominence in Holland was most opportune. Sir W. J. Collins says that,

"It might perhaps be claimed that, at no time in the history of man's progress since the dawn of civilization, and at no place on the earth's surface, were greater and more fruitful quickenings of the Spirit at work than in the Netherlands in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries." 4.

The Dutch Renaissance was touching and stirring all of life; and in it, says Collins, was born "a purer passion for things of the Spirit than even Luther contemplated or Calvin conceived." It is now

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1. Whitley, Minutes of the General Assembly, Vol. 1, p. x.
 2. The Baptist Movement in the Reformation and Onwards, p. 11.
 3. Heath, R., "The Anabaptists and Their English Descendants," The Contemporary Review, March, 1891, p. 400.
 4. "Dutch Dissenters and English General Baptists," Transactions Baptist Historical Society, Vol. 4 (1914-15), p. 66.

very certain that these religious impulses were not confined in Holland, but that at an early date they were influencing thought in England. It must not be forgotten that,

"During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries Holland's relations of a religious character with England were more frequent, closer, and at the same time more fruitful than with any other European country." 1.

There was a great movement of Dutch Anabaptists to England during the whole of the Reformation period. We first hear of large numbers coming there in 1528,^{2.} and until late in the century there is evidence of their steady growth in numbers. In 1546 a group came from Antwerp to London, where Catherine Parr made them welcome;^{3.} and in 1550, Dutch people literally came in shiploads. By 1562 the exiles from Holland numbered 30,000, and six years later^{4.} there were 5,225 in London alone. By 1573 it was estimated there were 50,000 in the country.^{5.} Gregory, indeed, records that between 50,000 and 100,000 Dutch refugees came to England in the period of the struggle of the Netherlands against Alva. The Dutch came in greatest numbers when persecution was greatest in their country and when England offered the most promising refuge, and they congregated in fixed centers such as London, Norwich (where they were a majority of the population in 1587^{6.}), Dover, Romeney, Sandwich, Canterbury, Colchester, and Hastings. Nor were they all to be found in the East and South of England, for many went to work in the woollen industry in the West.^{7.} Few of these immigrants ever repatriated themselves; most of them were assimilated by the Eng-

1. Ruffini, Religious Liberty, p. 101.

2. Dosker, The Dutch Anabaptists, pp. 45-46.

3. Ibid., p. 282.

4. Walker, Creeds and Platforms of Congregationalism, p. 6.

5. Puritanism in the Old World and in the New, p. 204.

6. Walker, supra.

7. Whitley, Minutes of the General Assembly, p. xi.

lish, losing their identity.

What influence did they have on their adopted country? Newman thinks they "made little if any impression on the people of England...."^{1.} But what about their religious influence? Many of them must have been Anabaptists for the Reformed Church had not, before the seventeenth century, gained its strength in Holland, and it was the Anabaptists who were being most sorely persecuted. Could it be that such enthusiastic people as the Dutch Anabaptists suddenly lost their zeal upon reaching England? That is both unlikely and untrue. Being the people they were, they could not throw off their conviction and zeal. Several of them wrote from an English prison to Fox, the martyrologist, in 1575, '... that we should understand differently from our belief, you are well aware is an impossibility.'^{2.} Foreign Anabaptists had to be very careful lest they should antagonize the powers of the land, but they could not be permanently silent. "The Netherlanders," says Gregory, "became missionaries to the people wherever they settled down, instructing them in the truths of the Bible...."^{3.} As early as 1534 nineteen Dutch men and six women were being examined at St. Paul's, London, accused of propagating Anabaptist opinions.^{4.} In 1537 a congregation of foreign Anabaptists was discovered at Ely, another just outside Aldgate Bars.^{5.} English Anabaptists sent deputies to the great conference at Buckholt, in Westphalia, in 1535.^{6.} A book was published in English about 1550 which favored Anabaptist opinions, and it was answered by one

1. History of Anti-paedobaptism, pp. 245-246.

2. Quoted in Evans, op. cit., Vol. 1, pp.153-154.

3. Op. cit., p. 205.

4. Lewis, History of Anabaptists in England, p. 38.

5. Heath, op. cit., pp. 389-392.

6. Ibid.

"Wylllyum Turner."^{1.} Fuller says that following the coming of Anne of Cleves to England,

'Dutchmen flockt faster than formerly to this England. Many of them had active souls, so that whilst their hands were busy about their manufactories, their heads were also beating about points of divinity.... soon after (they) began to broach their strange opinions, being branded with the general name of Anabaptists.' 2.

English Confessions of Faith now began to include articles opposing the Anabaptists, and more books were published against them.

That the Anabaptists had local organizations is proven by a few sentences from Strype concerning their activities during the reign of Edward VI:

'Sectaries appeared now in Essex and Kent, sheltering themselves under the profession of the Gospel.... These were the first to make separation from the reformed Church of England, having gathered congregations of their own. ... From whence I also collect, that they held the opinions of the Anabaptists and the Pelagians, that there were contributions made among them for the better maintaining of their congregations; that the members of the congregation in Kent went over to the congregation in Essex, to instruct and join with them, and that they had their meetings in Kent in divers places besides Feversham.' 3.

Henry VIII issued, probably at the excited insistence of the Elector of Hesse, in 1538 and 1539, proclamations against Anabaptists in which he declared they were seeking to subvert Englishmen.^{4.} However, the Anabaptists had remained. In the reign of Mary, they were evidently still making themselves felt. Evans quotes Marston as recording that 'the Anabaptists were the most numerous, and for some time by far the most formidable, opponents of the Church.'^{5.}

Elizabeth found it necessary early in her reign to issue a proclamation against Anabaptists, both foreign and native. She commanded

1. Burrage, op. cit., Vol. 1, p. 57.

2. Quoted in Evans, op. cit., Vol. 1, p. 53.

3. Ibid., pp. 77-78.

4. Evans, op. cit., Vol. 1, pp. 42, 51, 52; Whitley, Bibliography, p. 1.

5. Evans, op. cit., Vol. 1, p. 141.

'the Anabaptists and such like heretics, which have flocked to the coast towns of England, from the parts beyond the seas, under colour of shunning persecution, and have spread the poison of their sects in England, to depart the realm within twenty days, whether they were natural-born people of the land or foreigners, under pain of imprisonment and loss of goods.' 1.

This proclamation admitted that many Anabaptists had 'set up secret conventicles in London, by which means many English people, especially in London have been corrupted.' 2. Robert Some reported in 1589, 'there are several Anabaptistical conventicles in London and other places.' 3. These could not have been exclusively Dutch for he remarks that 'some persons of these sentiments have been bred at our universities.' Half a century after Elizabeth's proclamation, Laud told Charles I that the Kent Anabaptists were so deeply rooted that it was not possible to get rid of them quickly. 4.

With the admission that many of those in England who were called Anabaptists were not Anabaptists at all, the conclusion persists that this movement from the Continent had taken root in England and that, even when its organized life and witness were no longer possible, its spirit and distinctive emphases survived on the English scene. Dosker concludes, "So much is sure, in no country outside of Holland did they [the Anabaptists] exercise a more obvious and indisputable influence than on England." 5. Heath agrees, saying, "The more the matter is studied, the more it will be seen that in its interest in Anabaptist teaching England was only second to Germany and the Netherlands." 6. This is partly borne out

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1. Evans, op. cit., Vol. 1, p. 149.
 2. Heath, op. cit., p. 149.
 3. Evans, op. cit., Vol. 1, p. 156.
 4. Heath, op. cit., p. 391.
 5. The Dutch Anabaptists, p. 282 f.
 6. Op. cit., p. 391.

when we hear Barrow and Greenwood, pioneer Separatists, as late as 1589, being called members of the 'Anabaptistical order.'^{1.} England could not forget the Anabaptists.

It is not possible accurately to measure the contribution of Anabaptism to English Nonconformity, but surely the estimate of Clark is entirely wrong:

"Anabaptism never obtained any real hold in the land, was merely a sojourner within its borders for a brief space, and remained entirely an excrescence upon English life during the period of its stay -- so that, after this brief mention of it, it may well drop from our tale" (of English Nonconformity). 2.

^{3.} The suggestion of Whitley that an indication of the extent of the influence of Anabaptism in England was its winning "two known English adherents in forty years" equally misses the mark. Rather, Dosker is right in saying that

"the ancient principles were never wholly forgotten; they formed rather a leaven both in the Established Church and in the kingdom; and it is from the mass of these folk ... that the various nonconformist bodies were originally largely recruited. A glance at the map of England will furthermore convince us that the Roundheads of Cromwell mainly sprang from the same districts and counties where these people had originally settled in large numbers."4.

It is also true that Robert Browne, the father of modern Congregationalism, fully thought out his system of church government while in Norwich, in conversation with Robert Harrison, a resident of that place; and that they chose Norwich as the place in which to put it into practice. Norwich was full of Dutch refugees, and here Browne found a strong following among the lower classes.^{5.} Browne's distinctive doctrines are suggestive: he said it was the duty of all Christians to separate from communions where non-Christians were

1. Heath, op. cit., p. 391.

2. Op. cit., Vol. 1, p. 130.

3. History of British Baptists, p. 17. It is fair to say that Whitley later revised this view. Vid. Minutes of General Assembly, Vol. 1, p. x.

4. Op. cit., p. 282.

5. Walker, op. cit., pp. 15-16.

tolerated; that the local congregation should be independent in choosing its own officers and in exercising discipline. These were peculiarly Anabaptist teachings. It seems reasonable to suppose, then, that unconsciously or otherwise, principles of the Anabaptists became a part of the thinking of Browne and of other zealous Englishmen who were seeking a more thorough reformation. Collins agrees when he says

"the Separatist movement in England in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, especially in the Eastern and Southern counties, was powerfully fomented, and to some extent shaped and defined, by contact with the Dutch dissenters...." 1.

In short, "The Anabaptists were Puritans before Puritanism had sprung into recognized existence, and held substantially all that Puritans afterwards contended for...." 2.

The influence of Anabaptism on the early English Baptists was brought to bear more directly than merely through English Separatism, for persecution forced the Separatists into exile in Holland, whence Anabaptism had come to England and where it still flourished. There may have been people of Anabaptist beliefs in the London Barrowist congregation before 1590, for, as Champlin Burrage has shown, when most of the church under Francis Johnson had emigrated to Campen in Holland, Anabaptist views of a continental type appeared very quickly in it. We are not sure of their number, but some of these members continued in the fellowship for a while even after professing Anabaptist beliefs. Their excommunication about 1594 may have led to the removal of Johnson's congregation from Campen to Naarden. The names in this company of earliest English

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1. "Dutch Dissenters and English General Baptists," Transactions Baptist Hist. Society, Vol. 4, (1914-15), p. 83.
 2. Gregory, op. cit., p. 176.
 3. The Early English Dissenters, Vol. 1, pp. 221-222.

Anabaptists in Holland are not known, but we can be "practically certain" of three of them: Leonard Pridder, Henry Martin, and Thomas Michel (or Mitchell). One of the members of this group baptized himself, and then he baptized the others. What ultimately became of them we do not know, except that some of their number were still alive and holding Anabaptist views in 1611.^{2.}

The next group of English Anabaptists in Holland is better known for it became the parent group of the General Baptists. The Gainsborough Separatists led by John Smyth, under the direct influence of their Mennonite neighbors, went over in some numbers to the Anabaptist position:

"Mr. Pagit, in his Arrow-against Separation, says that 'out of a few members in the Brownists' churches, more fell to Anabaptism than out of many thousand members of the Presbyterian churches amongst the Dutch, or out of all the English Reformed churches there.'" 3.

John Smyth, following the order of the Johnsonian Anabaptists, first baptized himself and then the members who followed him in the change of belief. Later, as will be shown, this party split when Smyth became dissatisfied with his baptism and, with a good proportion of his company, sought union with the Waterlanders. Thomas Helwys and the remaining small group soon returned to England where they began a remarkable growth as the first General Baptist Church.

It is now known that by 1610 one group of thirty-two English Anabaptists adhered to Smyth and accepted the views of the Mennonites; Helwys and about ten others manfully declared the right of any body of Christians both to baptize and to ordain ministers and officers among themselves, and so felt no need for uniting with the

1. The Early English Dissenters, Vol. 1, p. 222.

2. Ibid.

3. Evans, op. cit., Vol. 1, pp. 18-19.

Mennonites; and yet a third group, of undetermined size, was separated because of some special beliefs about the Incarnation which reflect more Mennonite influence. Of these three groups, of course, we are interested in the second, and in the continuing Anabaptist influence upon its life. Even when the General Baptists were firmly established in England, they did not cut off their Dutch Anabaptist connections. At first their correspondence with the Mennonites was probably a continuation of the controversy with Smyth. The primary difference between Smyth and Helwys was on the question of succession in the ministry, though some other minor differences seem soon to have appeared. When Smyth applied to the Waterlanders, a branch of the Mennonites, for admission to their fellowship, the Helwys company had a conference with the Waterlanders in order to prevent their receiving Smyth's group.¹ Smyth persisted, presenting to the Waterlanders a doctrinal statement in twenty Latin articles, and having² forty-two signatures, and getting in return from two celebrated Waterlander ministers, Lubbert Gerrits and Hans de Ries, a more elaborate³ statement of the Waterlander faith in thirty-eight articles.

Meanwhile Helwys submitted a brief statement of his faith (in Latin) to the Dutch leaders. Smyth then took the Confession of Gerrits and de Ries and, in 1611, elaborated yet more in a Confession of one hundred Dutch articles. This act drew from Helwys, in that year and before he left Holland, a final Confession of the series -- possibly only a translation from Latin into English of those arti-

1. Burrage, The Early English Dissenters, Vol. 1, pp. 239-240.

2. Evans, op. cit., Vol. 1, p. 257.

3. Burgess, John Smyth, the Se-Baptist, pp. 187-188.

cles which he had submitted earlier in the controversy.^{1.} This Confession might be considered the first of the General Baptists, and it will be seen in more detail later.

Once settled in England (1612), Helwys and his church were not long alone. One party of sixteen persons under Elias Tookey separated (or were excommunicated) from them in 1624 or 1625, and turned instinctively to apply for union with the Waterlanders. It was found that convictions on two points separated them from their Dutch brethren:^{2.} on the taking of oaths and on the bearing of arms. The original London Church soon found that there were four other Baptist churches scattered over the country, at Lincoln, Sarum, Salisbury, and Tiverton. It is unlikely that these were planted by the little congregation in London, but were probably in each case the result of Smyth's influence: through his early labors, through contacts with him in Holland,^{3.} or through his writings. These five churches, like that of Tookey, entertained the hope of a union with the Waterlanders, and in 1626 negotiations were resumed. They had read the Waterlander Confession, and they said that only on the point of taking an oath did they disagree. DeRies answered that their willingness to participate in government and their celebrating the Lord's Supper every Sunday seemed also to stand in the way.^{4.}

Another attempt at union in 1630 failed, but when, during the Laudian persecutions, many English Baptists fled again to Holland, they were readily received without re-baptism into the Waterlander Church which had absorbed Smyth's company, and into other Mennonite churches.^{5.} When the Particular Baptists had appeared and had made

1. McGlothlin, Baptist Confessions, p. 84.

2. Burrage, op. cit., Vol. 1, pp. 270-272.

3. Whitley, History of British Baptists, pp. 48-49.

4. Burrage, op. cit., Vol. 1, p. 273.

5. Ibid., p. 280.

up their minds about the mode of baptism, they sent one of their number to Holland to one Mennonite group for final confirmation of their decision to be immersed. Intercourse between English General Baptists and the Anabaptists of Holland went on intermittently^{1.} until 1696. Barclay seems quite near the truth, then, when he says,

"We may therefore conclude that the first Arminian Baptist Churches in England were really Mennonite, and that at least, in some of these churches, the doctrines, practices and discipline of the Mennonites was practiced. This link in the evidence, at once explains the origin of many of the new and strange religious opinions and practices which seem suddenly to have burst into vigorous life when the civil war in England had hardly commenced." 2.

Dosker, however, does not tell the whole story when he sums up by saying, "No one claims that ... Baptists were an indigeneous growth The fathers of the English Baptists were Dutch Anabaptists."^{3.}

Whatever may have been the historical connections between the English Baptists and the Dutch Anabaptists during the first forty years of the seventeenth century, we are more interested in the actual contributions in thought which the older group made to the younger. There will presently be many occasions to trace back to the Anabaptists doctrines which find expression in the Baptist Confessions of the Civil War and Commonwealth Period; but, now, what about the general theological outlook of the Anabaptists? They were Arminians, before Arminius. That is surprising, too, for "the further one travels to the left in the ranks of the Reformed Churches^{4.} the more strongly Calvinistic the theology became." Anabaptists were the great exception; but it is not to be forgotten that there

1. Whitley, Minutes of General Assembly, Vol. 1, p. xiv.

2. Inner Life of the Religious Societies, p. 73.

3. Op. cit., p. 282.

4. Harrison, Arminianism, pp. 150-151.

was in their makeup an ancient evangelical tradition as well as the left-wing Protestant one. As early as 1525, Hoffman preached among them that though all men are sinful, all are called by God unto salvation since Christ died for them, and that if any man^{1.} willed to be saved God would supply the grace. In Holland in days of bitter persecution they had steadfastly held to the doctrines of free will and of the denial of original sin. While many of them had meanwhile been brought into the State Church there, all welcomed the challenge given by Arminius, and they spoke for and through him. The Arminian doctrine they had carried to England. A group of them in Kent in the days of Edward VI said that the doctrine of predestination 'was meeter for devils than for Christian men; that children are not born in original sin....'^{2.} But the Anabaptists were not a confessional group; they gave no authority to confessions. A few confessional statements they had made, in self defense. Before 1500 a simple Catechism is supposed to have been in current use among the pre-Reformation Anabaptist societies.^{3.} A statement of principles had come forth from a conference in 1524 at the house of their scholarly leader, Balthasar Hübmaier; another from Groningen in 1527. A general synod at Augsburg in 1526 drew up a doctrinal statement, which sounds like a modern Moravian Brethren confession. The tragic Munster affair produced some theses and apologies.^{4.} The Mennonites had no authoritative confessions, and they issued such as they had only to avoid misapprehension and to educate the public toward respecting their views. The Waterlander Confession of Gerrits and de Ries was only a private confession, never being accepted officially

1. Harrison, Arminianism, pp. 150-151.

2. Evans, op. cit., Vol. 1, pp. 77-78, quoting Strype.

3. Curtis, History of Creeds and Confessions, pp. 298-99, Vid. Heath, Social and Religious Heretics, concerning pre-Reformation societies.

4. Curtis, ibid.

though it was accepted generally as a fair statement of Waterlander
 1.
 views.

Mennonite influence is readily seen in the Helwys Confession of 1611. The Confession did show a departure from the hitherto markedly-consistent Calvinism of the Separatist movement; but it also showed decided signs of its authors' Calvinistic background. It is pre-Calvinist rather than Arminian. In its origins it owed much to Smyth and the Dutch Mennonites. Whitley suggests that,

"inasmuch as Smyth's friends joined the Dutch, and settled permanently in Amsterdam, the 20 [Articles of Smyth] ... have no direct bearing on the English developments. And the same may be said of Smyth's CII Dutch articles" 2.

That these Articles have no importance for Baptists, however, could be true in neither case, for the two Confessions found future use. The CII Articles, an elaboration of the thirty-eight Articles of Gerrits and de Ries, were edited into one hundred Propositions and Conclusions in English, published in 1613-14, and found their way into the hands of John Cotton in America. Cotton wrote,

'Sad and woeful is the memory of Mr. Smyth's strong consolation on his death-bed, which is set as a seal to his gross and damnable Arminianism and enthusiasm delivered in the Confession of his Faith prefixed to the story of his life and death.' 3.

Thus this work of Smyth was referred to on both sides of the Atlantic. In England it seems to have been referred to by General Baptists as late as 1651. Its Eighteenth Article is enough to give it immortality -- a pioneer pronouncement for absolute religious freedom.

Helwys took this Confession and recast it into twenty-seven Articles, the first General Baptist Confession, which, if not used

1. Barclay, op. cit., p. 83.

2. Minutes of the General Assembly, p. xviii.

3. Quoted in Burgess, op. cit., p. 237.

by churches of that connection until their next Confession appeared in 1651, became at least the standard for the Church at Spitalfields, London. As for the twenty Articles or Brief Confession of Smyth, it was the first English Separatist document in at least two respects: it was anti-Calvinistic, and it was anti-paedobaptist. In addition, in its stand for democracy in the church and against the rigid disciplinarianism of the Mennonites, it pointed the way for the English Baptist churches. Helwys' Confession is especially noteworthy in that it was drawn up by a layman, or laymen,-- for Helwys had the help as well as the consent of his little flock in preparing it. The contention of the leader was that the humblest church member might be equal in knowledge of spiritual and religious things with those who had most human knowledge, and the participation of the whole church was consistent with this view. The purpose of publishing this Confession, the church said, was to defend the "Truth of God" which they professed, to give enlightenment to their own number because of the "fearful falls of some that hath been of us," and to clear themselves from unjust charges.¹ At some length the position of the church is stated on the two points for which they had been most criticized: the nature and extent of Christ's redemptive work, and the proper subjects of baptism. Election is said to be conditioned by foreknown faith, reprobation by foreknown unbelief, and the perseverance of saints is denied. The doctrine of Original Sin is admitted. The Church is defined as,

" a company of faithful people, separated from the world by the word and spirit of God, being knit unto the Lord, and one unto another, by baptism, upon their own confession of the faith, and sins."

1. Burgess, op. cit., p. 205.

The independence and autonomy of each congregation is asserted, and only two classes of officers are recognized. Infant baptism is denied, and the Lord's Supper is described simply as a memorial. Obedience to the magistrate is strongly enjoined, and the use of oaths and the sword is defined. The forty-two signatures are followed by a sentence which is much like that which stands at the end of the Scottish Confession of 1560: "We subscribe to the truth of these Articles, desiring further instruction." The Scripture quotations follow the Genevan Version, to which Helwys seems to have adhered closely. The 1611 Confession had an educative, rather than a controversial purpose, and apparently it did not quickly fall into disuse.

The real kinship of Anabaptist and Baptist movements is indicated when the doctrines they preached and the methods they used are summarily compared.¹ In these principles and practices, at least, they were generally alike: the Church is composed only of baptized believers; only those who are spiritually awakened ought to be baptized; sacerdotalism and sacramentalism have no scriptural basis; there must be separation of Church and State; the Scriptures are the final rule of faith and practice for Christians; the right of private interpretation of the Scriptures; the independence of the local church; simplicity of worship forms; the equality of believers; the strict conformity of life with doctrine (so, church discipline); the memorial view of the Supper; the subordinate place of the Old Testament as compared with the New; the companion authority of conscience and the Scriptures; a connectional relation among

1. Payne saliently notes that "In England and America the first six of Sattler's Articles (1538) have generally been reproduced by Baptists. Only the seventh, the total rejection of the magistracy failed to reappear." (The Baptist Movement, p. 21.)

congregations; the use of baptism instead of a covenant as the door into the church; opposition to mixed marriages; only two kinds of officers in a church; lay-preaching; missionary zeal; and simplicity of life. They also shared a negative quality: disappointment that the Reformation had stopped short of its goal. There were, to be sure, differences between them, but even some of these were either bridged or sharply questioned from time to time, as, for example, the taking of oaths, the bearing of arms, the payment of a stipend to ministers, the holding of civil office. Some of these were decided only by time and circumstance, as in the case of differences between Mennonites and Swiss Anabaptists. Opinions among Anabaptists and Baptists on many subordinate questions have always been subject to change.

There is great truth in a statement by Walton: "...it is misleading to attempt to write its [the Baptist movement's] history in isolation from the Separatist movement"; but hardly a grain of truth in its neighbor: "It is altogether too English a movement to owe its inspiration and forms of life to the continental sects."¹
²
 The conclusion of Richard Heath is that the Baptists in England represent the first stage of the Anabaptist movement -- the days when it was aggressive, optimistic, and confident that the kingdom of God would come on earth -- and so they threw themselves without reservation into the seventeenth century struggle for justice, righteousness and reform. The second stage of Anabaptism, he says, --- the period of disheartening persecution when it gave up its

1. The Gathered Community, pp. 63-64.

2. "The Anabaptists and their English Descendants," The Contemporary Review, March, 1891, pp. 389-406.

earthly hopes and set its heart only on heavenly things -- is represented in the Quakers. That seems a probable suggestion, if it is remembered at the same time that the Baptists were not simply children of the Mennonites, but that they were the result of Anabaptism acting on early English Separatism. Then the relative position of Baptists to Anabaptists is seen to be somewhat like that of Congregationalists to early Puritans. Neither Anabaptism nor Puritanism¹ was sporadic or sterile, a "Melchizedek" among religious events. The two met in the Baptists -- both kinds -- and there was little clash, but rather a mediating tendency, a centripetal force from the beginning. Anabaptism was Arminian in theology, and there were Arminian Baptists; Puritanism was strongly Calvinistic, and there were Calvinistic Baptists -- but two movements did not result. The two forces acted upon one another; neither went too far in its own direction; they were complementary; in time they fused. They were one movement. The same tendency goes on today in the Baptist movement; there is as much variety as ever, and as much unity.

IV. Separatism and the Culmination of the English Reformation

The emergence of the Baptists was seen early in the seventeenth century, as Separatism began to take its permanent form as Independency. The rise of Independency was a gradual thing; and at first it was not concerned with church polity. Its Puritan precursors antedated it by many years. From the time of Edward VI, whenever there was an overemphasis on organization and conformity in the English Church, the result was the appearance of a non-conformist

1. Clark, op. cit., p. 176.

spirit. But this Puritanism was a reform movement from within the Church of England, seeking to bring the Church to conform more nearly to some continental models. Toward the close of the sixteenth century a more radical expression of dissent appeared, supported by those who are properly called Separatists. This group abandoned hope of reforming the Church of England from within, and so justified its secession from it. Another small group, the Baptists, early in the seventeenth century rejected the whole principle of an Established Church, as being opposed to the spirit and teachings of the New Testament, and as contradicting the spiritual nature of the Kingdom of God, and set up autonomous churches of their own, beginning (in England) in 1611 or 1612. The two groups came to be represented by the name "Independency," though members of the former, when their polity had been worked out after 1616, took the name "Independents," or "Congregationalists," while members of the latter were forced to take a further distinguishing title.

It is not until the Elizabethan era is reached that the emergence of the Independent conception of the Church is seen; and Clark says the birth-period of Independency, when theory was becoming practice, should be thought of as extending to "somewhere about 1630."¹ In 1580 or 1581 Robert Browne gathered a small company, by means of a covenant, at Norwich, and thus began the establishment of groups separate from the Church of England which claimed, nevertheless, to be true Churches. Browne, himself, previous to organizing his Church, had been in Holland, and there the Mennonites had perhaps helped him² to arrive at the conclusion that State and Church should be separate.

1. Op. cit., p. 173.

2. Payne, The Free Church Tradition, pp. 32-33.

However, he was not thinking of a permanent separation from the^{1.} the Church of England, says Burrage, but of a temporary separation which would be the means of producing a true Church of England not subservient to King, Parliament, or magistrate. Browne ultimately gave up the undertaking, but his work was soon taken up by others.

Between 1586 and 1592, nonconformist ideas multiplied rapidly around London, there being by the latter date at least two companies^{2.} of Separatists in the city. Greenwood and Barrow led one group, until they were imprisoned, and after several years hanged. Browne had become a Separatist under pressure of Archbishop and bishops, while Barrow had defied the wishes of the Church officers in separating. More than that, Barrow had gone beyond Browne in saying that the Church of England was beyond reforming; it was one's duty^{3.} to condemn and desert it. Francis Johnson became the pastor and Greenwood the teacher of this "Ancient Church" in 1592, after Greenwood, at liberty for a season, had led the church in the formal adoption of a constitution. Two elders and two deacons had been^{4.} chosen at the same time. Johnson was soon arrested, and a year after the execution of Greenwood and Barrow, a majority of the church followed Browne's congregation in fleeing to Holland. They settled in Amsterdam, and Henry Ainsworth became their "teacher," though possibly not before 1597, when Johnson again joined the com-^{5.}pany.

Even before the full organization of this church in London, two of its leaders, Barrow and Greenwood, had put forth in 1589 a

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1. Op. cit., Vol. 1, p. 104.
 2. Burrage, op. cit., p. 145.
 3. Ibid.
 4. Walker, op. cit., pp. 29-30.
 5. Burrage, op. cit., Vol. 1, p. 163.

church creed based upon a missionary tractate of Browne and Harrison.^{1.} This True Description, as it was called, is a kind of ideal sketch of the Church. The Bible is made the standard for doctrine and practice. There is almost no theological statement in the creed, for these people held the same predominantly Calvinistic views as most of the Church of England from which they were withdrawing. The elders were placed apart from and above their brethren as a ruling class, in the Separatist document, leaving the brethren only the power of election and of approving the actions of the elders. On this point Barrow differed from Browne, who held that the whole church is the ultimate authority in its affairs. The part of the Church now in Holland kept up a steady correspondence with that part yet in London,^{2.} submitting important questions to the decision of the elders there. In 1596 the members in Holland, being settled among anti-Calvinists, felt the need of fully stating their doctrinal position. After conferring with the pastor, in the Clink Prison in London, and the remainder of the Church in that city, they issued A True Confession of the Faith Francis Johnson must have been the author of most if not all of this Confession, though Williston Walker^{3.} thinks that Ainsworth had the larger part in the preparation of it.

The Confession consists of forty-five articles, some of which concern doctrine and others, polity. Regarding doctrine, the current English Calvinism is reaffirmed. The statements on polity, however, mark a real development in appreciation of congregational principles. This development is seen in Articles 32 to 39, which outline the program of procedure by which this group would reform

1. Walker, op. cit., pp. 29-30.

2. Dexter, Congregationalism of the Last Three Hundred Years, p.268.

3. Op. cit., pp. 42-43.

the Church of England. The first step in this reform would be the renunciation by all those who thought as they did of that Church, its offices, communion, and support. These seceders would then join by covenant and confession of faith into local congregations. Approved members would preach and teach, and later those leaders who had special qualifications were to be chosen to the scriptural offices of pastor, teacher, elder, and deacon. Only then was baptism to be administered to the children of the members, and the Supper was to be participated in by members of mature years. Baptism was not to admit its recipient to the "full privileges of the church"; indeed, on the subject of baptism there was some perplexity and hesitation.^{1.} Once these true churches were organized the property and revenues of the Old Church were to be confiscated by civil authority, the magistrate using force to accomplish this if necessary. The question of whether the church power resides in the elders or in the membership is only vaguely answered, but there seems to be a definite leaning in the direction of the former.^{2.}

This Confession was translated into Latin in 1598, was reprinted in 1607, being dedicated to 'students of Holy Scripture in the christian Universities of Leyden, in Holland, of St. Andrews in Scotland, of Heidelberg, Geneva, and other like famous schools of learning in the Low Countreyes, Scotland, Germany, and France,' and was sent to the professors in these Universities.^{3.} Our interest in it lies in the fact that when the seven Particular Baptist Churches of London met to draw up the earliest statement of their faith, in 1644,

1. Vid. Powicke, Henry Barrowe, pp. 110-114.

2. Dexter, Congregationalism of the Last Three Hundred Year_s, pp. 324-325.

3. Ibid.

they had this Confession before them and used it as their model. Thus the Separatist declaration became a part of Baptist life; but, not before the Baptists had known many formative experiences. The Separatist church of Amsterdam, like that of Browne at Middleburg, never returned to England, and since they were not part of the future organizational life of English Independency, we may leave them. They had thought and worked out many of the principles of Independency.

The next two churches which went from England to Holland, however, were to return in surprising form. In 1599 an Independent church had been formed at Gainsborough, Lincolnshire, and had separated into two sections four years later, one section remaining at Gainsborough, the other meeting at Scrooby. By 1608 both had migrated to Holland, under John Smyth and John Robinson, respectively, being urged on by a government which was now thinking that exile was a better means of getting rid of Separatists than imprisonment. The two groups went first to Amsterdam, but Robinson's moved on to Leyden. Smyth and his company may have associated themselves with the "Ancient Church" of Johnson, but if they did, the association did not last long. Smyth began to confer with the noted Mennonite ministers of Amsterdam, Gerrits and de Ries, and soon he found himself in agreement with them on many points. Most of his company followed his thinking, and he and they withdrew from the "Ancient Church" (from whatever the association had been). The chief differences between the two groups seem to have been:

"the importance of baptism being administered, as a sign of admission into the Church, to adults or persons of competent

1. Burrage, C., op. cit., Vol. 1, p. 231.

age to understand its meaning, and not to infants who happened to be 'the seed of the faithful'; and "the entire distinction between the Old and the New Testament." 1.

2.

Clark says there was also disagreement about certain worship practices. Smyth's Arminianism does not seem to have developed far enough yet to be a controversial point. In 1609 he followed his convictions about baptism in baptizing himself (since he thought there was no person present who was competent to baptize him), and then the members of the exile groups which had followed him. It is interesting to note that the company going with Robinson to Leyden was largely made up of people to whom he had ministered at Norwich (and also of people from Suffolk, Essex, Kent, and London), and that the emigrants who went with Smyth were from Lincolnshire, Yorkshire, and Nottinghamshire.³ In all these districts Anabaptist influence had long been notable.

How many "Baptist" ideas did Smyth bring with him from English Separatism? And how strongly was his thinking influenced by immediate associations with the Mennonites? We know that he had already made up his mind concerning the visible Church when he went over. His first publication, after disclaiming his Anglican orders, had concerned this subject. He had said,

'The churches of the apostolique constitution consisted of saints only The true ministrie of the apostolique institution was by election, approbation and ordination of that particular holy people whereunto they did administer' 4.

At one step he had gone from the Church of England to the democratic position that the seat of authority in a church lay in the members as a whole. He frankly admitted his indebtedness to the writings of

1. Barclay, op. cit., p. 68.

2. Op. cit., Vol. 1, p. 189.

3. Whitley, History of British Baptists, p. 20. Also vid. p. 367, where it is noted that most of the emigrants from the Scrooby district stayed at Amsterdam and became Baptist. "Only two families joined the Pilgrim Fathers...."

4. Quoted in Whitley, ibid., pp. 22-23.

the earlier leaders of the Separatist movement; they had, he said, "reduced the Church to the true primitive and Apostolique constitution."¹ Yet he was certain that the "Ancient Church" made too much of lay-elders, who were included with the pastor and teacher in the presbytery; so that,

'...where the popish prelacy was suppressed, and the triformed presbytery of pastors, teachers, and lay elders substituted, one anti-christ was put down and another substituted in its place.'²

The Independent churches held that five kinds of officers were named in the New Testament, and that their functions were distinct, but Smyth said that what the Independent churches took for distinct offices were nothing more than different functions of the same kind of officers. There was to be but one order of elders, said he; one person might preach, teach, and "rule." Church officers were of two kinds: Bishops and Deacons. In this whole matter Smyth was already in agreement with the Anabaptists. As a Separatist he had used a church covenant, probably suggested to him by Francis Johnson, his old tutor.³ By this covenant, made with his old church in 1605/06, he and his people had agreed

'to walke in all his (the Lord's) wayes, made known, or to be made known unto them, according to their best endeavors, whatsoever it should cost them, the Lord assisting them.'⁴

Here was a basis for a progressive theology! The church covenant idea was old in both England and Scotland, and the continental Anabaptists had used covenants (though Burrage denies that the idea came to Britain from them).⁵ Nor is there evidence that Smyth gave

1. Burgess, op. cit., p. 120.

2. Cited in Barclay, op. cit., pp. 101-102.

3. Burrage, op. cit., p. 230.

4. Quoted in Burrage, op. cit., p. 230.

5. Op. cit., Vol. 1, pp. 97-98.

up the use of the covenant idea after becoming a Baptist. Baptism, however, quickly took the place of the covenant among Baptists.^{1.}

Mention has already been made of the fact that early in the Separatist movement there was some sentiment for believers' baptism. In the autumn of 1608 the subject of baptism was brought to Smyth's attention.^{2.} (The Mennonites surely would not have kept quiet about that.) He became convinced that in the primitive Church infants were not baptized, that his infant baptism was improper, and so that he should be baptized again. Anabaptist influence must also have been important in Smyth's early decision against women speaking in the church "in tyme of prophecy," and in his revolutionary pronouncements in favor of religious freedom and the separation of Church and State. Why, then, did he not go to the Mennonites for baptism? The reason was that the Mennonites had, or tolerated, some peculiar views about the Person of Christ, about oaths, and about the Human Will.

By February, 1610, however, Smyth and thirty-two of his people had concluded that the Waterlanders were after all a "true church of Christ," and they petitioned for admission to their fellowship.^{3.} The contributions of Smyth to the Baptist cause were not, in any sense, annulled by his decision to cast in his lot with the Waterlanders; and that his influence in early Baptist life was formative cannot be doubted. A book which he wrote on infant baptism in 1609, his Mark of the Beast, created a sensation in Holland, and was imported to England. Soon in cities with which he had been associated, as Lincoln and Coventry, and in cities whence other refugees had come to

1. Burrage, C., op. cit., Vol. 1, pp. 236-237.

2. Ibid., pp. 261-262.

3. Ibid., pp. 241-243.

1.

Amsterdam, like Salisbury and Tiverton, Baptist churches appeared. Who, also, can measure the extent of the influence of Smyth's Principles and Inferences concerning the visible Church, of his Confessions of Faith, and of his other writings?

Smyth and Helwys, with their respective followers, parted company when Smyth decided that he had not been justified in baptizing himself and when he asked for membership with the Mennonites.^{2.} Helwys seems to have blamed the Mennonites for this new attitude on the part of Smyth toward the question of succession in the ministry.^{3.} For two years after the break with Smyth in 1609/10, Helwys continued in Amsterdam. Then, as the leading thinker of his party, he advanced beyond Smyth in discerning that it was the duty -- indeed the primary duty-- of a Church of Christ to bear witness to the truth; and so he felt he had to bring his exile to an end and return, in spite of the perils, with his church to England. In the two years before returning, however, Helwys was busy writing.

From Helwys' writings we get a clear view of the thinking of the first General Baptist Church. First appeared the Confession of the congregation, based on his Synopsis fidae, verae Christianiae Ecclesiae of nineteen articles.^{4.} Then Helwys began to publish on special points. First came, A Short and Plaine Proofoe, by the Word and Workes of God that God's Decree is not the Cause of any Mans Sinne or Condemnation: and That all Men are redeemed by Christ: as also That no Infants are condemned. Next, also in 1611, was An Admonition unto the Congregations

1. Whitley, Minutes of the General Assembly, Vol. 1, p. xiii.

2. Formal union of the Smyth group with the Waterlanders did not take place until January 20, 1615, months after Smyth's death in 1612.

3. Burrage, C., op. cit., Vol. 1, p. 251.

4. Whitley, A Baptist Bibliography, p. 5.

men call the New Fryelers [Fryesers], in the Lowe Countries, in

which he sought to convince the Mennonites on four points:

- '1. That Christ took his flesh of Marie, having a true earthlie, naturall bodie.
2. That a Sabbath, or day of rest, is to be kept holy everie first day of the weeke.
3. That there is no succession nor privilege to persons in holie thinges.
4. That Magistracie, being an holy ordinance of God, debarreth not anie from being of the Church of Christ.' 1.

Finally, the next year, appeared A Short Declaration of the Mistry of Iniquity, which was "the first claim for freedom of worship published in English,"^{2.} and which he unwisely addressed to King James.

Burrage has summarized from these four works the following opinions as prevalent in the Helwys congregation:

- "1. Baptism, not a church covenant, is the true 'form' of a church.
2. Every separate congregation of people, whether it has officers or not, may 'come together to Pray, Prophecie, breake bread, and administer in all the holy ordinances.'
3. 'A Church ought not to consist of such a multitude as cannot have perticular knowledge oue [sic] off another.'
4. 'That officers of everie Church or congregation are either Elders, who by their office do especially feed the flock concerning their soules ... or Deacons Men, and Women who by their office relieve the necessities of the poore and impotent brethren concerning their bodies.'
5. These officers 'are to be chosen when there are persons qualified according to the rules of Christ Testament ... By Election and approbacion off that Church or congregation whereoff they are members ... with Fasting, Prayer, and Laying on off hands... And there being but one rule for Elders, therefore but one sort of Elders.' This congregation also maintained that church officers may hold office only in the church in which they have been ordained to their respective offices. John Smyth held that 'an Elder off one (true) Church is an Elder off all (true) Churches in the World.'
6. Magistrates are to be highly honoured as a means of taking vengeance 'on them that do evill,' and may even be members 'off Christs church,' and retain their office. Smyth opposed this view.
7. An Anabaptist (of the Helwys type) might take an oath 'for the deciding of strife.' Helwys would also make believers' baptism

1. From title page quoted in Evans, op. cit., Vol. 1, pp. 227 ff.

2. Burrage, C., op. cit., Vol. 1, p. 253.

(by sprinkling or pouring) an absolute necessity for salvation⁽¹⁾, teaching that the contrary doctrine of infant baptism is sufficient reason for eternal punishment...." 2.

Helwys consistently argued that Christ died to save all men and not only certain elect ones; but, in his third publication he declared that only Adam had free will : for a man to have free will would be to have no need of Christ. His contention concerning the ordination of elders ran thus: if only elders may ordain elders, and if only elders may baptize, then you are back at the idea of apostolic succession.³

The leaders of the young Baptist church were soon in prison, and their end is not known; but the church lived on. As King James addressed his second parliament (1613), he remarked that he had never thought violence the way of planting the truth. The Baptists seized upon this bit of surprising news and petitioned the Commons that it be enacted that the taking of an oath might free those who were in prison for the sake of conscience.⁴ Their request was not granted. Leonard Busher and John Murton pled for religious freedom in 1614 and 1615. Already the Baptists had entered upon a vigorous literary campaign to educate the public to the fact that they were not the type of people usually thought of in England in connection with the name Anabaptist . Their propaganda was well received in some quarters, so that by 1622 even the King and the Archbishop were becoming dis-

1. It is not certain, however, that this is an adequate estimate of Helwys' view of baptism. In his Mystery of Iniquity he said, 'If a man be in prison or any place and be converted to the Lord, and would be baptized with water but cannot, he is accepted with God who accepts the will for the deed.' (Quoted in Burgess, op. cit., pp. 164-166.

2. Op. cit., Vol. 1, pp. 253-255 .

3. Barclay, op. cit., p. 71.

4. Whitley, History of British Baptists, pp. 38-39.

turbed at hearing 'of soe manie defeccions from our Religion, both to Poperie and Anabaptisme, or other points of Seperacion, in some parts of this kingdome.'^{1.} Doctrinally, they stood alone:

"In the welter of Predestinarian theology that marked their time they alone amongst Englishmen outside the ranks of the Anglican and Roman Churches kept a clear field in their scheme of thought for the free moral action of man."^{2.}

Meanwhile changes were taking place in the life of English Puritanism. After about 1605 there were two kinds of Puritans. The older type were presbyterian non-separatists; the younger were independent, or congregational, non-separatists.^{3.} The English Church in Leyden belonged to the latter group, which would have the Church of England reformed along Congregational lines but continued as the National Church. Out of the Leyden Church came Henry Jacob in 1616, adopting the terms of Smyth's covenant in laying the foundation of "the first Independent or Congregational Church in England."^{4.} This was not the first Separatist Church in England -- it was not even strictly Separatist yet -- but it did represent a new beginning in English Congregational life. It soon meant a new beginning for Baptist life too, for in 1638 some of the members who opposed the baptism of infants withdrew to form the first Particular (or Calvinistic) Baptist Church, with John Spilsbury as leader.^{5.} Thus the old English Separatism flowered into Baptist and Congregational groups.

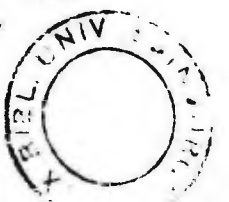
Baptists and Congregationalists undoubtedly have much in common in their backgrounds and origins. Neither was Brownist or Barrowist,

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1. Quoted in Burrage, C., op. cit., Vol. 1, p. 267.
 2. Burgess, John Smyth, the Se-Baptist, pp. 282-283.
 3. Burrage, C., op. cit., Vol. 1, pp. 287-288. They were non-separatists in the sense that permanent separation from the National Church was not their aim.
 4. Dorner, History of Protestant Theology, pp. 49-50.
 5. Brown, L., Baptists and Fifth-Monarchy Men, pp. 3-4.

but their kinship went far beyond both. Dorner suggests that, because of the preponderant development in the sphere of the will instead of the intellect in British theology, "the different schools of the continent became different Church parties or sects, and carried out their differences more in practice than in doctrine."¹ But, the Congregationalists and the Baptists also had important doctrinal differences, as well as likenesses. Neither denomination was a mere transplantation of a continental church party. Both came from a Puritan background in England,² but the Baptists were acted upon more strongly by Anabaptist antecedents. Puritan elements did show themselves again and again in Baptist life; see, for example, the legalistic tendency of Puritanism in the Seventh-Day Baptists. The congregationalism of both Baptists and Congregationalists was a legitimate outcome of the Reformation; though with Baptists congregationalism and separatism were instinctive, appearing as soon as they appeared. The Bible was for both groups the final external authority, and the right of individual interpretation was affirmed by both. Thus general creeds were with them no more than declarations of the faith prevailing at a given time, and to which no one was bound to give assent beyond his conviction. Baptists and Congregationalists shared a Puritan ideal of the Church. However, differences between the two included the definition of the visible Church, the meaning and subjects of baptism, freedom of religion, and separation of Church and State. In a word, Congregationalism represented a third protest, the Baptists, a fourth. The first protest in the long series was

1. Op. cit., pp. 49-50.

2. Burrage says the early Congregationalists were "merely a certain type of Puritans, and not separatists from the Church of England...." (The Early English Dissenters, Vol.1, p. 281.)



against Romanism as concentrated in a Pope, and against subjecting the King to his authority; the second was against papal practice and prelacy, and favored synodical authority; the third was against the inclusion of the whole nation in the Church, irrespective of spiritual character, and, ultimately, in favor of self-governing powers for each Christian society; the fourth was against including in the Church any persons except those who had consciously and intellegently received Christ as their Lord, and so were possessed of his divine life. 1. 2. Clark remarks upon the fact that the Baptists outstripped the Congregationalists in growth during the first part of the seventeenth century, as both movements were beginning, and says that the obvious reason for this was the opportunity for expression suddenly given to the long-felt protest against infant baptism. The return of Helwys and his company made articulate, for some people, a conviction which had been in England at least since the coming of the first Anabaptists. Had Helwys not returned, that conviction must soon have found expression anyway, for the times were ripe for it.

The English Baptist movement is thus not unfairly characterized by terms meant to describe the whole Baptist Movement, beginning with the Swiss Anabaptists:

'It turned itself against the new theological dogmatism, against compulsory State-Christianity, and against secularization. It lived by opposition, and emphasized against the actual development of the Reformation elements which belong to the Reformation itself, but which the Reformation had very speedily left to fuse with the tasks of an established church standing in reciprocal relations to a secular culture.' 3.

1. Clifford, The English Baptists, pp. 9-11.

2. Op. cit., pp. 192 and 302 fn.

3. Westin, G., "The Hubmaier Celebration," The Baptist Quarterly, Vol. 4 (1928-29), p. 157, quoting Troeltsche.

To be sure, early English Baptists were not just a reproduction of the Dutch Mennonites under peculiar seventeenth century English conditions; but it must be admitted that they did reproduce much that was of the true spirit of the continental Anabaptist movement, and many of the outward characteristics of that movement as well. This is not to deny the many native English Reformation elements in early Baptist thought. But the question persists: would there have been any Baptists in England had there been no Anabaptist movement on the Continent? One might, surely, as well ask, would there have been any Baptists had there been no Puritan Movement in England? The answer to the first question appears a more probable affirmative, for the small foreign plant of Anabaptism had already managed to survive the merciless reigns of a Henry VIII, a Mary, and an Elizabeth. One could not expect the early Baptists to admit their kinship or debt to the Anabaptists; to do so meant placing themselves in mortal jeopardy. Much of their effort must rather be spent in attempting to prove the antiquity of their movement: it was older than any Reformation they said.^{1.} While Thomas Helwys could honestly declare his indebtedness to the Mennonites,^{2.} he and his successors were much more concerned about their debt to the Lord of the New Testament.

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1. Thomas Grantham in Christianismus Primitivus (pp.92-93) says that William Kiffin wrote in 1645: "It is well known to many, and especially to ourselves, that our congregations as they now are, were erected and framed according to the rule of Christ before we heard of any Reformation even at the time when Episcopacy was at the height of its vanishing glory." Grantham also says that Thomas Patience, John Spilsbury, William Kiffin, and John Pears, "five of the leading Baptists in the world in their day," endorsed Daniel King's book, A Way to Sion... (1650), which made "a distinct claim that the Baptists have existed since the days of Christ." At least, says Grantham (1678), the Baptists have existed since "before the time of Henry VIII...."
 2. Burgess, op. cit., pp. 147-148.

CHAPTER II

THE LONDON PARTICULAR BAPTIST CONFESSION, 1644

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CHAPTER II

THE LONDON PARTICULAR BAPTIST CONFESSION (1644)

I. The Rise of the Particular Baptists, 1633-1644

1.

The literary campaign of the early General Baptists was remarkably effective, proving the superiority of their new strategy of peaceful penetration over the initial pleas and petitions to King and Parliament. The ground for this propaganda had already been prepared in many places by the early arrival from Holland of the writings of John Smyth. Smyth's Mark of the Beast, a book on infant baptism published in 1609, seems to have been directly responsible for the movement of groups of people from the Separatist to the Baptist position, the book having been circulated "widely" in the West.^{1.} Three years later, Helwys' Mistery of Iniquity, too, was finding many interested readers. With the imprisonment of Helwys, the leadership of the original church in London passed, by 1615, to John Murton. In that year the church published Objections Answered by way of Dialogue, in which the limits of civil authority, the meaning of baptism, infants' salvation, predestination, and free will were discussed, and in which the strange opinions which some continental Anabaptists (Hoffmanites) held concerning the nature of Christ were decried.^{2.} Two years later appeared Murton's Truth's Champion, a protest against narrow views of election; and in 1620 was published (probably also by Murton) the important work, A Description of what God hath predestined concerning man. It is notable

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1. Whitley, W.T., "Salisbury and Tiverton about 1630," in Transactions Baptist Historical Society, Vol.3 (1912-13), p. 6.
 2. Whitley, History of British Baptists, pp. 40-44.

that in this last named book the author outlined the manner of organizing a true church, and as notable that the Baptists printed this work for themselves. They said they were returning to testify to their own countrymen, and they seem to have brought with them a printing press from Holland to assist in the propagation of their message.^{1.} Murton sent his Truth's Champion to a group of Separatists at Colchester and it was well received.^{2.} His A Description... was sent forth opportunely. Many English people had been shocked by the high views on predestination adopted by the Synod of Dort, and the subject was everywhere in the country receiving fresh attention. The Baptists knew they would be read on this point, and, not to lose a good opportunity, they added a section on baptism.^{3.} Some people were convinced there was truth in both of their arguments; others found themselves in agreement with the Baptists only on the second subject.

This literary activity on the part of the Baptists naturally aroused opposition. John Robinson, in 1614, prepared and sent from Leyden an answer to Helwys' Mistery of Iniquity.^{4.} In 1623 appeared Ainsworth's A Censure upon a Dialogue of the Anabaptists, Intituled, A Description of what God hath Predestined..., and Edward Jessop's A Discovery of the Errors of the English Anabaptists. Murton's A Description... drew two important answers in 1624. One was by John Robinson, A Defense of the Doctrine Propounded by the Synode of Dort: Against Iohn Murton and His Associates... In the other,

1. Burrage, C., The Early English Dissenters, Vol.1, pp.261-262.

2. Whitley, History of British Baptists, pp. 40-44.

3. Ibid.

4. Of Religious Communion Private and Publique. With the silencing of the clamours rayseed by Mr. Thomas Helwisse agaynst our re-tayning the Baptism receaved in England... Vid. Whitley, A Baptist Bibliography, p. 7.

John Dod collaborated^{1.} with Robert Cleaver on The Patrimony of Christian Children... Nonetheless, the "cause of Anabaptism" was making progress in England. New Baptist churches began gradually to appear after 1620. Clifford says the Baptists' "brave proclamation of freedom and of truth was magnetic. It cast a spell over^{2.} men. 'Multitudes of disciples' gathered about them." This is a too enthusiastic account of their early growth, but we know that General Baptist churches appeared (before the Commonwealth Period) in the East and Central Midlands, in London, and in the South. There were new churches at Yarmouth, in Norfolk; Stony Stratford and Amersham, in Bucks.;^{3.} Ashford, in Kent; and in other places.

2.

The appearance of the Particular Baptists was neither a sudden nor a surprising event. While their backgrounds were somewhat different, General and Particular Baptists progressed along approximately the same roads of thought toward their ultimate Baptist position; and General Baptist propaganda greatly encouraged the movement of their Calvinistic brethren toward that position. The Particular Baptists appeared first in the church which Henry Jacob organized in London in 1616. Jacob had spent ten years in exile in Holland, ministering to an Independent Puritan congregation in Middleburg since 1605. He was not alone in returning from Holland; and after conferences with Puritan leaders in London, his followers were "gathered," on the basis of a confession of individual faith and of

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1. Whitley, A Baptist Bibliography, p. 8.
 2. The English Baptists, pp. 20-21.
 3. Ibid.

a covenant, into a church.^{1.} This church evidently included both Independent Puritans and people who rejected on principle all connection with the Established Church. John Lathrop, an Independent Puritan of Kent, became pastor of the church in 1625.

About five years later the matter of separating from the Church of England was brought forcibly to their attention when a member of the congregation had his child christened in a parish church.^{2.} John Canne, who also had spent years in Holland and who was about to depart again for that country, sought at this time to persuade the congregation to become entirely Separatist; but the church declined to say whether the parish churches definitely were or were not true churches. Upon this decision some of the members joined with Chidley (an elder), Dupper, and Dyer in forming a Separatist congregation. But Lathrop's congregation continued to grow, in spite of the fact that Lathrop and other leaders were imprisoned under the rigorous administration of Bishop Laud over the London Diocese.

During the period of the leaders' imprisonment, in 1633, it was felt that for the convenience and safety of the members, the congregation should be divided. Those, therefore, who had expressed dissatisfaction with the non-Separatist stand of part of the church were amicably dismissed, on September 12, to form a congregation of their own. Among those who were dismissed were some who held to anti-paedobaptist convictions: 'Mr. Eaton with some others' received 'a further Baptisme.'^{3.} This did not mean a split in the church, however, which continued to be composed partly of paedobaptists and partly of anti-paedobaptists. In 1634 Lathrop having at

1. Burrage, C., op. cit., Vol. 1, pp. 313-314.

2. Ibid., pp. 320-321.

3. Ibid., pp. 326-327.

his request been released from the office of pastor of the mother church, was set free from prison and sailed for America. Henry Jessey succeeded him as pastor in 1637. In the spring of 1638, still other members, becoming convinced that baptism should be administered only to professing believers, left the church, without censure, and joined the mixed church of Eaton -- now under the leadership of John Spilsbury.¹ The question of baptism was still agitating in the mother church, and in 1640, for the stated purpose of facilitating the secrecy of their meetings, it divided equally, one part under Mr. Jessey, the other congregation being joined to Mr. Praise-God Barbon. Each group chose its own officers.

Meanwhile, there was a new development in Spilsbury's church. By 1640 it had been brought to the attention of Richard Blunt and some other members that sprinkling or pouring was not the New Testament form of baptism, but that true baptism 'ought to be by dipping the Body into the Water, resembling Burial and rising again.'² Spilsbury was not yet convinced of this. Therefore, those who favored the administration of baptism by immersion decided to separate from the Spilsbury church, and to meet together in two groups. To whom should they now go for baptism? Immersion of infants had practically fallen into disuse in the Church of England; and they knew no English dissenters who were then practicing the immersion of believers. They did know of the Rynsburgers or Collegiants in Holland; and Richard Blunt could speak Dutch. So Blunt was sent to Holland, where he was received kindly by the Anabaptist group and possibly

1. Burrage, C., op. cit., Vol. 1, p. 330.

2. Ibid.

was baptized by the Rynsburgers before he returned with letters from one of their teachers, John Batten. There is also a possibility that Blunt was not baptized, but only received instruction, in Holland;^{1.} but, upon his return he baptized Blacklock, and he and Blacklock baptized the rest of their friends. The two companies came together into one church, and by January, 1641/42, the total membership numbered fifty-four. Blunt led one section, Blacklock^{2.} led the other. In 1642, forty-one of Jessey's followers in the mother church accepted believers' baptism and withdrew. One of their number, Hanserd Knollys, who had recently returned from America, soon became pastor of the Baptist Church in Coleman Street; another, William Kiffin, became pastor of the Baptist Church in Devonshire Square. The final step came in 1645 when Jessey had made up his mind about baptism, was immersed, and led many of his church in becoming Baptist.^{3.}

3.

By 1644 there were seven Particular Baptist churches in London, forty-seven in England.^{4.} Under the Laudian rule they had to meet secretly, and the membership of the churches was known only to the members themselves. In view of the disadvantages under which they worked, how did they manage to grow so rapidly? For one thing, the General Baptists had preceded them, and by their sanity and zeal had dispelled some of the fearful illusions which many English people had held concerning the aims and character of the Baptists. Early General Baptist missionary activity was probably

1. This point is discussed under Appendix A.

2. Burrage, C., op. cit., Vol. 1, pp. 333-334.

3. Blomfield, W.E., "Yorkshire Baptist Churches in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries," in The Baptists of Yorkshire, pp. 55-56.

4. Brown, Baptists and Fifth-Monarchy Men, p. 4.

more extensive than has been supposed. Without being able to trace this activity minutely, we know that the General Baptists, by maintaining a close connectional relationship of their churches, sought to direct the activities of their representatives as they bore witness over many parts of the country. Pastors were given leave by their churches to visit neglected areas and to respond to the calls for assistance from isolated Baptists. They also never lost sight of the office of "Apostle" or "Messenger." Furthermore, the witnessing of certain unordained members was quite as effective as that of the pastors. Early in the period of the civil wars, General and Particular Baptists were evangelizing with equal zeal. Perhaps the most conspicuous General Baptist success was that of William Jeffery and his companions in Kent, where in a few years they organized more than twenty churches.¹ John Miller was active in Dorset; Samuel Oates pioneered in Essex; and Henry Denne organized churches in Cambridgeshire, Huntingdonshire, and Lincolnshire.² It was natural for Particular Baptists to carry on a similar work, though, at first, only through representatives of single churches. Benjamin Cox, whom Richard Baxter calls 'an old Anabaptist minister,' thus planted his denomination in Bedfordshire. Gifford preached in Somerset, Gloucestershire, and Wiltshire. John Tombes worked in Herefordshire, Monmouthshire, Worcestershire, and Gloucestershire; and Thomas Collier travelled throughout the West-country, being especially busy in Dorset and Somerset.

While the General Baptists helped prepare the way for the Par-

1. Bosworth, F., "The Baptists in England Two-hundred Years Ago," in The Circular Letter of several Baptist Churches who assembled at Devizes, May, 1860.

2. Ibid.

particular Baptists, the two almost never appeared in the same communities.^{1.} We hear of their being in competition in one area, Kent, but even here Thomas Lamb, the London General Baptist leader, is said to have 'laboured to reconcile particular election with universal redemption....'^{2.} Generally there was no quarrel between the two groups, but also rarely was there intercourse between them. Nevertheless, if General Baptists helped prepare the way for Particular Baptists, they in turn were greatly stimulated by the rise of their Calvinistic brethren.

A second explanation for the rapid growth of the Particular Baptists was the effective methods of propaganda which they employed. Their missionary activities were backed up by a stream of propaganda by which they sought to advertise their opinions. Some of their methods were quite novel. They early began to distribute pamphlets on particular doctrinal and ecclesiastical subjects. "For a year or two pamphleteers were shocked" at the boldness and effectiveness of their labors.^{3.} Their worthy opponent, Richard Baxter, lamented, 'As I am writing the hawkers are crying Baptist books under my window....'^{4.} Even more spectacular were the public debates in which the Baptists engaged, and which usually turned out to their advantage. The first of these was at Westerleigh, near Bristol, in 1641, when John Canne and Richard Fowler 'debated ye business of the Reformation, and ye Duty of Separation from ye Worship of Antichrist.' Largely in consequence of this debate the Broadmead Church was formed in Bristol.^{5.} A more notable debate occurred on October 17,

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1. Whitley, Minutes of the General Assembly, Vol.1, pp.xlix-1.
 2. Taylor, History of the English General Baptists, Vol.1, p.100, and p. 100 fn., quoting Crosby, History of British Baptists.
 3. Whitley, History of British Baptists, p. 78.
 4. Quoted by Bosworth, loc. cit.
 5. Langley, A.S., "Seventeenth Century Baptist Disputations," in Transactions Baptist Hist. Soc., Vol.5 (1918-19), pp.215-220.

1642, at Southwark, London. William Kiffin engaged Dr. Daniel Featley in discussing a wide range of subjects including the Trinity, the Church, and the Sacraments. There is some question as to who won, but the debate was to have helpful, if disturbing repercussions for Baptists later. In the same year 'an ingenuous Baptist' engaged the Reverend John Tombes at Bristol. Tombes was converted,^{1.} and was soon training anti-paedobaptist propagandists. The General Baptists liked the idea of debating, so two of them, Timothy Batt and Thomas Lamb, arranged a disputation with John Stalham, M.A., in 1643. Stalham published a record of this: The Summe of a Conference at Terling in Essex... concerning Infants Baptisme, which helped to advertise the Baptists' doctrine. In January, 1643, at London, John Tombes had enough courage to contest with Dr. N. Holmes, Stephen Marshall, M.A., Thomas Blake, M.A., and Henry Scudder, on the question: what Scripture is there for infant baptism? In the same year Hanserd Knollys and William Kiffin debated with^{2.} Henry Jessey at London. Jessey was converted to their views. These disputations the Baptists saw as excellent times for the sale of inexpensive publications on their doctrines. Some of the books were pocket-size, for the convenience of the purchasers.^{3.} After the debate with Featley, in 1642, Kiffin, Hobson, and Ritor, together with watermen, cooks, turners, and others, posted bills on house-doors to advertise Baptist meetings. If the people were so interested in the disputed subjects, they must be told where more about

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1. "Dissent in Worcestershire during the Seventeenth Century" (unsigned), from Transactions Baptist Hist. Soc., Vol. 7 (1920-21), pp. 3-4.
 2. Langley, op. cit., pp. 216-220.
 3. Bosworth, op. cit.

them might be learned.

Then, these Baptists pioneered in lay-preaching. From the point of view of the Church of England, of course, all Baptist preachers (before 1642 at least) were laymen; likewise from the Puritan point of view, for they had received no ordination from presbyters. But "from the Baptist point of view they were exemplifying the priesthood of all believers...."^{1.} Their right to preach was defended often in debate, and vindicated in practice. Every Baptist was taught to think of himself as a propagandist and missionary.

A final explanation of Particular Baptist growth before 1644 is seen in the ardor with which the members threw themselves into the political struggle of the day. Of all the religious groups in England perhaps they were in the poorest position to influence political events, in that political office was not available to them, and in that their numbers were small; but, their zeal for the Kingdom of Christ forced them to throw their weight actively on the side of any issue which gave promise of bringing that ideal nearer. They put behind themselves at once the idea of a Christian's non-participation in government, which had often appeared in the Baptist Movement on the Continent, and which the General Baptists discarded more slowly. From their beginning, they urged that the State has no authority over spiritual matters. First, they issued in 1644 a tract on Liberty of Conscience, and in the next eight years they published five other well known pamphlets on the subject.^{2.}

1. Whitley, History of British Baptists, p. 68.

2. Whitley, A Baptist Bibliography, pp. 16 ff.

Thus they continued the work begun by Helwys, Murton, and the other General Baptists of contending for religious freedom for all and for a complete change in the relations of State and Church. It followed, then, that they must oppose tithes and a State-controlled ministry, -- and that they would oppose the tryanny of Charles I. In seeking these ends they were not alone; the Independents were often with them in opposing tithes and State-control of the ministry, and a large section of the English people thought something should be done about the government under which they were living. The Baptists thus found themselves part of a growing movement for freedom. In truth, they had come out of obscurity at a critical moment, and their principles would not permit them to stand aloof from the affairs of their nation.

"The year 1641," says Langley, "is one of the great dates in English constitutional history. The old feudalism and the **Stuart** pretensions were soon to be destroyed. Parliamentary government was to become a reality. Not only was civil liberty to be a fact, there was also to be religious equality, for one of the first and greatest achievements of the Long Parliament was to place on the Statute Book Acts abolishing the Courts of Star Chamber and High Commission, and thus destroying the chief instruments of regal and ecclesiastical tyranny, and declaring in a practical way that 'the civil power has no right to make and impose ecclesiastical laws'." 1.

The Baptists dared now work more openly. Pastors had more freedom to itinerate and evangelize. People who held Baptist convictions, but who had hesitated to separate from the Independent Puritan groups with which they were connected, now began to organize Baptist congregations. University men and clergymen such as Cornwall, Blackwood, and Denne declared themselves Baptists and threw their not-inconsiderable weight behind the Baptist cause. Both General

1. "Seventeenth Century Baptist Disputations," in Transactions Baptist Hist. Soc., Vol. 6 (1918-19), p. 216.

and Particular Baptists began to grow rapidly.

II. Origins of the London Confession

1.

It is not to be supposed, however, that Baptist growth before 1644 was unobserved or unhindered by their opponents. Almost every hindrance was put in their way, and each sign of their activity was welcomed with fresh cries of alarm. Evidently An Act of Common Councell for the prohibiting of all persons whatsoever, from crying or putting to sale about the streets within this City and Liberties, any pamphlets, books, or papers whatsoever (1643) was^{1.} directed largely against them. Before 1640 Baptists were generally named along with other sects and "heretics" known to be in England; after that date they were more often singled out for special condemnation. For example, Apocalypsis: Or, the Revelation of certain notorious Advancers of Heresie..., which appeared in 1640, contains little beside sketches of notorious continental people, beginning with Thomas Munzer and ending with Henry Nicholas, all classed as Anabaptists. Unpleasant references to the Baptists were made in such works as A Discoverie of 29 Sects here in London... (1641), Bancroft's Dangerous Positions and Proceedings, Published and Practiced within this Land of Britaine under pretense of Reformation... (1640), A Treatise concerning Schisme and Schismatics (1642), Taylor's A Cluster of Coxcombes... (1642), and The Clergy's Bill of Complaint... (1643). Also such direct attacks as Ainsworth's A Seasonable Discourse... (1644), E.J.'s The Anabaptists Groundwork for

1. Whitley, A Baptist Bibliography, p. 15.

Reformation... (1644), and A Declaration against Anabaptists: To Stop the Prosecution of their Errours... (1644) were probably to be expected. But the publications which aroused the Baptists most were: the evilly suggestive study, Mock Majesty: or, The Seige of Munster (1644); the biting A Confutation of the Anabaptists, and All others who affect not Civill Government (by Bakewell, 1644); the directly accusing A Warning for England, especially for London, in the famous history of the frantick Anabaptists, their wild preachings and practices in Germany (1642); and the fiercely provoking A Short History of the Anabaptists of High and Low Germany. (1642)¹. On this painful note their enemies harped: these Baptists are but those prophets of anarchy from the Continent, the Anabaptists of Munster come hither.

Before these false accusations could the Baptists now afford to keep silence? Yet, dared they speak out? Their foes would turn against them any statement of their distinctive beliefs. They had already had samples of what to expect if they asserted themselves. With the meeting of the Long Parliament, November 3, 1640, it had seemed to some of them that a new day was arriving. They must have supported the "Root and Branch Petition" (signed by 15,000 Londoners, December, 1640), asking that the rule of Bishops might be entirely abolished; but what had come of that? Still, their old enemy, Laud, had been voted guilty of high treason (February 26, 1641) by the Commons, and had been committed to the Tower. An Assembly of Divines had been appointed to advise upon the future

1. For dates of publications named on this and the preceding page vid. Whitley, A Baptist Bibliography.

constitution of the Church of England (but Baptists had, of course, been given no representation in it). That Assembly, which had begun its sittings on July 1, 1643, had received a letter on November 20 from some London ministers asking for speedy action on two matters, among others: first, 'For some cause against Brownism, Anabaptism, Antinomianism'; second, 'Against the gathering of churches.'¹ The members of the Assembly had also crusaded in London pulpits against Anabaptists and Brownists. The Divines had decided to ask Parliament to pronounce Anabaptists heretics, but Parliament had, according to Penrose, shown them more mercy than they deserved by refraining from doing that yet.² But the Assembly had not dropped the matter. It was debated again on August 22. Robert Baillie, about that time, wrote,

'Our next work is to give our advice what to do for suppressing of Anabaptists, Antinomians, and other sectaries. It will be hard work; yet so much as concerns us will be quietly dispatched; I hope in one session.'³

2.

Stirred by these events, the Baptists had prepared and submitted to the Assembly a petition for liberty of conscience for all. This petition, of December 29, 1643, had not been heard by the Assembly, being opposed by the Independent members with as much vehemence as by the Presbyterians. Baillie reported the event, saying,

'Some of the Anabaptists came to the Assembly's scribe with a letter, inveighing against our covenant, and carrying with them a printed sheet of 'Admonitions to the Assembly from an old English Anabaptist at Amsterdam, to give a full liberty

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1. Carruthers, S.W., The Everyday Work of the Westminster Assembly, p. 91.
 2. Ibid., p. 97.
 3. Ibid.

of conscience to all sects, and to beware of keeping any Sabbath, and such like'.¹ 1.

Later, Thomas Edwards commented personally on the proposition of the Baptists -- and he spoke for the majority of the Assembly --

'A toleration is the grand design of the devil -- it is the most transcendent catholic and fundamental evil for this kingdom.... It is against the whole stream and current of scripture, both in the Old and in the New Testament, -- this is Abaddon, Appollyon, the destroyer of all religion, the abomination of desolation and astonishment, the liberty of perdition -- all the devils in hell, and their instruments, being at work to promote a toleration.'² 2.

Nevertheless, the Baptists knew the time for action was at hand, and they acted. Edwards could report in 1645,

'there have been more books written, sermons preached, words spoken, besides plottings and actings for a toleration, within these last four years, than for all other things. Every day now brings forth books for a toleration.'³ 3.

Moreover, the Baptists would prepare a formal statement of their views, a Confession of their Faith.

3.

It has been suggested that the publication of A Short History of the Anabaptists of High and Low Germany gave rise to the Confession of 1644.⁴ Its accusations were certainly enough to provoke the Baptists to action. It said,

"All these are Sions of that stock of Anabaptism, that was transplanted out of Holland in the yeare 1535, when two ships laden with Anabaptists, fled into England after they had mist the enterprise of Amsterdam. To these doctrines you may

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1. Fletcher, J., History of the Revival and Progress of Independency in England, pp. 34-35. The "old English Anabaptist" was probably John Smyth.
 2. Quoted in Barclay, Inner Life of the Religious Societies of the Commonwealth, p. 142.
 3. Ibid.
 4. A note written in the front of this pamphlet in the Angus Library, Regent's Park College, Oxford, probably by Dr. Joseph Angus, and dated 1854, says, "This scurrilous history originated the first Confession of 1644."

joyne their practice. The seditious Pamphlets, the tumultuous rising of rude multitudes threatening bloud and destruction; the preaching of the cobblers, feltmakers, taylors, groomes, and women, the chusing of any place for God's service but the Church; the night meetings of naked men and women; the licentiousness of spiritual marriages without legall forme; These things if they are not looked into, will bring us in time to community of wives, community of goods, and destruction of all." 1.

Some of these accusations are indeed answered in the Confession; but, A Warning for England especially for London ... was equally provoking.^{2.}

It is to be noted that both of these pamphlets appeared in 1642. Is it not likely that the appearance of A Confutation of the Anabaptists and of All others who affect not Civill Government, in 1644, furnished the final provocation to the issuing of the Confession? In it Thomas Bakewell, the author, says of the Baptists,

"these are they to whom I chiefly bend the whole drift of my disputation, as being absolute enemies of the essential being of civill government. It is neither conniving, nor limiting, nor removing that will serve their tunes, unless they have an utter extirpation of it: so then all the rest doe some way or other dash against civill government: but these are the professed enemies of it. Hence I conclude that none of these are the men whom I intend, when, I say, they are faithfull Christians, and loyal subjects."

The Baptists could not go on indefinitely ignoring the false reports being circulated about them, and such a calumination as this demanded an immediate answer. They were driven to state their faith.

4.

The fifteen representatives of the seven London churches^{3.} who met to sign the Confession were an interesting group. Each

1. Pp. 55-56.

2. It is on its title-page called "A Comparative History"; and its concluding words are: "so let all the factious and seditious enemies of the Church and state perish: but upon the head of King Charles let the crowne flourish. Amen."

3. Goadby, Bye-Paths in Baptist History, p. 111, gives the names of the churches as Devonshire Square, Broad Street (Wapping), Great St. Helens, Crutched Friars, Bishopgate Street, Coleman Street, and Glazier's Hall.

church had two signers, except Spilsbury's Church which had three. Who among these men contributed most to the preparation of the Confession? The three about whom most is known, and who would be most likely to make large contributions, were John Spilsbury, William Kiffin, and Samuel Richardson. Spilsbury was a cobbler by trade. Being pastor of the oldest Particular Baptist Church, he was called the "great Patriarch of the Anabaptist Confession."¹ Kiffin joined Spilsbury's Church in 1641, but by 1644 he was leading, with Thomas Patient, the new Devonshire Square Church, having meanwhile spent a term in prison for his evangelizing activities. Soon he was to become one of the wealthiest merchants in London, thanks to his interests in the woollen trade with Holland. Richardson, likewise, was a prominent merchant and tradesman in London, and a member of Spilsbury's Church. His writings alone place him as one of the most responsible and able leaders of the early Particular Baptists, and his work on the Confession must have been important. It was he who later was to speak for the group in publicly refuting Featley's criticism of the Confession.² These three, with Thomas Patient, were most active propagandists during our period. It is to be noted that all were laymen.

III. Contents of the Confession

1.

The Particular Baptists probably shared with the old Anabaptists and the contemporary General Baptists and Independents an

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1. Underwood, A History of English Baptists, p. 60.
 2. Briefe Considerations on Dr. Featley, his Book, intituled The Dippers Dipt.

absolutely prohibitive prejudice against authoritative confessions or creeds, and possibly something of a prejudice against all Confessions. But this Confession was forced from them and must assume the form of an apology or defense. What plan should it follow? Since many of the members of the London churches had been connected with the older Separatist movement, they knew about the Separatist Confession of 1596. This the members of the seven churches took as their model, revising it to suit their own views. The structure of the two Confessions is much the same, as indeed the wording often is, but the later one is longer and more comprehensive. It largely anticipates the Westminster Confession, "but with more rhetorical expansion and greater tenderness of tone."¹

It is, from one point of view, hardly fair to compare the Confession of 1644 with its model. "A True Confession" was scarcely intended to be as full a statement of doctrine and practice as the Baptists intended their Confession to be. A large portion of the 1596 declaration -- a portion which would not ordinarily appear in a confession of faith at all -- was given to the immediate interest and practical issue of the means of reforming the Church of England along Separatist lines. That was not, and had never been the goal of the Baptists; they were building an entirely new structure on the New Testament pattern. Moreover, some of the Separatists' statements were of necessity largely theoretical, in view of the solitary and abnormal life which the church had known; but, in the forty-eight years following the Confession of 1596 most of that

1. Green, The Christian Creed and the Creeds of Christendom, p. 150.

theory had been worked out, under better conditions, by Independents and Baptists, and now the Particular Baptist churches of London were even proceeding to demonstrate their unity and unanimity. Naturally there had been development in doctrinal theory, as well as in practice, in Separatist circles; and so we would expect statements of 1644 to be more clear and incisive than those of 1596. The two Confessions certainly have a fundamentally Calvinistic theological basis, and both subscribe to the scheme known as Federal Theology. This system, which emphasizes the conception of the two Covenants of Works and Grace, is supposed by some to have been an importation to England from Holland; but, there is no real reason for doubting its growth natively on British soil, after Cartwright and Davenant, while the origins of the conception may be traced at least to Bullinger and Olevianus.¹ Finally, both Confessions are notable for their Christological emphasis. The Person of Christ obviously dominates the theology. Nine of the forty-five articles of the Separatist Confession concern Christology; so do thirteen of the fifty articles of the Baptist Confession.

2.

Did the London Baptist brethren have before themselves as guides any confessions or creeds other than the one named above? We cannot say with certainty; but, when the points in their Confession which purposely deviate from the positions of the 1596 Confession are studied, along with the new material which they added in their Confession, an amazing kinship appears to exist between

1. Beveridge, History of the Westminster Assembly, p. 113.

these points and the beliefs and practices of the General Baptists, even as seen in the 1611 Confession of Helwys and his church. Not only does the general agreement of Particular and General Baptist ideas stand over against statements of the Separatists, but the Particular Baptists seem to have borrowed distinct thought-forms and even phrases from their General brethren for use in their Confession. There may be a larger truth than was intended in the statement of Whitley: "General Baptists worked out on scriptural lines a simple pattern, which was also adopted by Particular Baptists in most respects...."¹ In the absence of final proof, it has been usually assumed that General and Particular Baptists lived, certainly through the Commonwealth Period, in complete isolation, without even unofficial intercourse. Whatever the usual relation of the two groups in the country, that isolation could hardly have been always possible in London. Events and common aims drew them together. Then it must be remembered that in London the General Baptists probably outnumbered the seven Particular churches in 1644, and there it was General Baptists who were most often in the news. In the calumniating literature of their opponents the heretical Arminianism of the Baptists was almost always pointed out, and the Confession of 1644 gave greatest surprise to many in that it represented some Baptists as being Calvinistic. In view of the contents of this Calvinistic Confession it seems safe to suppose that the authors had availed themselves of some General Baptist statement or statements -- one of Smyth's Confessions, or that of the Helwys Church. More than merely

1. History of British Baptists, p. 87.

vague ideas concerning the General Baptist positions seem to have been possessed by this group. General Baptist statements would probably not have been consciously copied, but they do seem to have been consulted. It will therefore be well in studying the Confession of 1644 to keep in mind not only the Separatist Confession of 1596, but also the General Baptist Confession of 1611.

3. Its Theological Viewpoint

The Calvinism of the Confession of 1644 was of a moderate type. The opinion is held that Christ died for the elect, "which were those which God the Father gave him," but that in no wise denies "that the Gospel ... is to be preached to all men as the ground of faith...."¹ A new Article (i.e., one not to be found in the 1596 Confession)² reasons sympathetically the perseverance of saints. However, the terms of the Separatist Confession concerning election and reprobation were not to the liking of the authors. They say that God has "foreordained some men to eternall life through Christ"; but, instead of God's having "ordained other ... men to eternal condemnation," they speak of God's "leaving the rest in their sinne to their just condemnation, to the praise of his justice."³ So, only the permissive will of God is involved in the state of lost men. Article 23, on Perseverance, says of the believer that he can never "finally nor totally fall away." The Westminster Confession repeats these terms, "totally and finally," but the expression must have been in common use at the time. In the matter of knowledge of his perseverance, this Confession goes on to warn the believer against de-

1. Article 21, McGlothlin, Baptist Confessions of Faith, p. 180.

2. Article 23, Ibid., p. 181.

3. Article 3, Ibid., p. 175.

pending on his feelings.

The effort at softening the doctrine and urging the "sweet reasonableness" of the Gospel continues to give a fine evangelical tone to the Confession. This is especially seen in Article 4, where the authors, in describing the hopelessness of man in his natural condition, add at the end, "without relation to Christ"; or, as the second Edition (1645) interprets that, "Unless the Lord Jesus Christ set them free."^{1.} The position of the elect is said, in Article 5, to be solely due to their "being loved of God with an everlasting love."^{2.} Later there is a new and more comprehensive statement seeking to clarify the meaning of Christ's mediatorship. God has benevolently taken the initiative in the matter, and his gracious purpose is clearly seen.

The authors meanwhile ~~guarded~~ carefully against using legalistic conceptions. Not content with announcing the three-fold office of Christ, Article 14 proceeds to point out man's need for that office. Then, the preaching of the Gospel for the conversion of sinners is said to be "absolutely free."^{3.} It must be noted that the authors omitted not only statements of the Separatist Confession with which they were in doctrinal disagreement, but also some references which seemed to them superfluous and unnecessary. There is no mention of angels, for example, nor of sin in general, contrasted with particular sins. The authors declined to speak about original sin, but preferred to think only in terms of definite transgressions. Was this

1. Article 4, Underhill, Confessions of Faith, p. 29.
 2. Article 12, McGlothlin, op. cit., p. 177.
 3. Article 25, McGlothlin, op. cit., p. 181.

hesitancy in following their Separatist brethren in using the term "original sin" reflective of the General Baptist stand that this is an 'idle term'?

4. The New Section on the Believer

A whole new section of six articles on the believer is added to this Confession. The Baptists held that the baptized believer is the primary unit in the Church and in Christ's Kingdom on earth.

Appropriately, therefore, the believer should be described before the Church was discussed. Thus, in order, his union with God, his justification, his sanctification, his reconciliation, his appointed warfare, and his source of strength are set forth.^{1.} The definitions of Justification and Sanctification are of special interest. Justification is described as "a gracious and free acquittance of a guiltie sinfull creature, ~~from~~ all sin, by God, through the satisfaction that Christ hath made by his death."^{2.} Then follows a clause apart, as though it might have come from a separate source: "And this applied in the manifestation of it through faith." The Separatist Confession had not mentioned Justification, but the General Baptist Confession of 1611 had defined it: "That man is justified only by the righteousness of Christ, apprehended by faith...."^{3.} Concerning Sanctification, the 1644 Confession speaks alone:

"all believers are a holy and sanctified people, and that sanctification is a spirituall grace of the new Covenant, and effect of t he love of God, manifested in the soule, whereby the beleever (sic) is in truth and realitie separated, both in soul and body, through the bloud of the everlasting Covenant,

1. Articles 27-32.

2. Article 28, McGlothlin, op. cit., p. 182.

3. Article 6, Underhill, op. cit., p. 5.

whereby he also presseth after a heavenly and Evangelical perfection in obedience to all the Commands which Christ as head and King in this new Covenant, has prescribed to him." 1.

5. The Church and Its Officers

It is when one comes to the doctrine of the Church and its officers that the Particular Baptist divergence from the positions of Separatism and kinship with the the positions of the General Baptists becomes most striking. Baptists and Separatists were forming together the new lines called "Independency" as the period of the civil wars was reached, but it will be seen that the two differed in church practice as well as in church theory. The Particular Baptists now defined the Church as,

"a company of visible Saints, called and separated from the world, by the word and Spirit of God, to the visible profession of the faith of the gospel, being baptized into that faith, and joyned to the Lord, and to each other, by mutuall agreement, in the practical enjoyment of the Ordinances commanded by Christ their head and King." 2.

This definition followed the pattern of thought and statement laid down by the General Baptists in 1611:

"...the church of Christ is a company of faithful people, separated from the world by the word and Spirit of God, being knit unto the Lord, and one unto another, by baptism, upon their own confession of the faith, and sins." 3.

Surely there is in these statements more than a general agreement on the theory of the Church. On the other hand, there is an uninviting vagueness about the definition of the Church given in the Separatist Confession of 1596:

"Christ hath here on earth a spirituall kingdome and ae (sic) canonicall regiment in his Church ouer his servants, which Church he hath purchased and redeemed to himself ... separating

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1. Article 29, McGlothlin, op. cit., pp. 182-183.
 2. Article 33, McGlothlin, op. cit., p. 183.
 3. Article 10, Underhill, op. cit., p. 6.

them from amongst beleivers, from idolatrie, false worship, superstition ... making them a royall Priesthood, an holy Nation, a people set at libertie to shew foorth the virtues of him that hath called them out of darknes into his meruelous light, gathering and uniting the together as members of one body in his faith, loue and holy order, unto all generall and mutuall duties, instructing and governing the by such officers and lawes as hee hath prescribed in his word, by which Officers and lawes hee governeth his Church, and by none other." 1.

The Baptists did not like the idea of "his Church ouer his servants," and "by which Officers ... he governeth his Church." The Church must be of His servants, and by all of them it must be governed. The definition of the Church given in the Confession of 1589 had been much like that of 1596:

"... a company and fellowship of faithful and holie people gathered in the name of Christ Jesus ... worshipping him aright, being peaceable and quietlie governed by his Officers and lawes, keeping the vnitie of faith in the bond of peace & love vnfaigned." 2.

It, too, had not clearly defined the means of "gathering" a church, the government of a church, or the door of entrance into the visible Church. The Baptists early saw the difficulties raised by the Separatist practice of permitting infants one Ordinance of church fellowship, baptism, and denying them another, the Supper.³ However, as will be shown, they were not the first to conceive of baptism as a public testimony and a door of entrance into the visible Church.

Before leaving the definitions of the Church, two phrases used only in the Confessions of 1611 and 1644 should be noted. The first concerns the agent separating believers from the world: "the word and Spirit of God." Early seventeenth century Puritan thought held

1. Article 17, Walker, The Creeds and Platforms of Congregationalism, p. 64.

2. Walker, Ibid., p. 33.

3. Vid. Article 37, Confession of 1596, Walker, Ibid, p. 71.

that the Holy Spirit made Scripture to be God's Word, both in inspiring its writers and in enlightening its hearers or readers. But one of the major controversies of the time gathered around the question whether the Spirit can save, or even speak to men, apart from the Word of Scripture.¹ These Baptists must have held that the Spirit and the Word must never be separated, at least as the joint agent in salvation. Nuttall suggests, interestingly, that "The natural tendency in Puritanism ... was to associate the Holy Spirit in man with man's reason."² The other phrase common to the definitions in the two Baptist Confessions is "the faith," which seems to be used in a special way. Article 33 (1644) speaks of a visible profession of "the faith," and of being baptized into "the faith." These references are apparently to the body of belief or doctrine which belongs to the true Church Universal. But, in keeping with their insistence upon the voluntary nature of membership in the local church, the Confession simply says that believers "are called thither" to enroll in the church. The authors omitted the Separatist statement that one of the purposes of joining the Christian fellowship is that believers "may bee made meet to bee partakers of their inheritance in the kingdom of God."³ Whether it was intended or not, that suggested to the Baptists that the Church was an agent of salvation. In the Second Edition the authors were to include this Separatist statement, but to insert some words at its center: "... that they may be assured that
they are meet to be partakers...."⁴

1. Nuttall, G.F., The Holy Spirit, p. 23.

2. Ibid., p. 36.

3. Article 18, Walker, op. cit., p. 65.

4. Article 35, Underhill, op. cit., p. 40.

The officers of a church are, in the 1644 Confession, said to be "Pastors, teachers, elders, and deacons," following the example of the Separatists, who also said that in addition to these the church should choose "Helpers to the instruction, government, and service" of the church.^{1.} However, there is reason to believe the Particular Baptists always followed the General Baptists in attributing these titles to special functions of the only two kinds of officers in the church, for in the 1646 Edition of this Confession, and in all editions subsequent to it, only the offices of Elder and Deacon are named.^{2.} Furthermore, while the authority of officers in the church had been vaguely defined in the Separatist statements, and rather seemed to approximate to that of the presbyterian system, this Confession defines the authority of an officer as only equivalent to that of any ordinary member of the church. In 1644 the Particular Baptists were convinced that ministers should be supported by their churches; that ministers were responsible only to the churches which called them; and that no special provision needed to be made for excommunicating unworthy ministers. In this last particular the Baptists were quite unlike their Separatist brethren, who devoted most of an article of their Confession to the matter of deposing and excommunicating unworthy ministers.^{3.} The Baptist emphasis concerns the performance of the duties of his office by the lawfully called minister; the Separatist emphasis, more disciplinary, concerns the procedure to follow in dealing with the unworthy minister. Separatists went to some length in answering the frequent question, what would they

1. Article 19, Walker, op. cit., p. 55.

2. Underhill, op. cit., p. 41 fn.

3. Article 23, Walker, op. cit., p. 56.

do with a Sovereign who was worthy of excommunication? Baptists follow them in answering the same question; but by their silence on the matter of dealing with refractory ministers they mean to indicate that the minister is not to be thought of or dealt with differently from any other member. The Baptist doctrine of the Church is involved in the whole question of discipline, and because of its involvement the Baptists were careful to soften their disciplinary pronouncements. If the Church be composed only of saints, a set of stern disciplinary measures was unseemly. The right of the church to cast out members is admitted, but each church is advised that it "ought with great care and tenderness, and due advice to proceed against her members."¹ The General Baptist Confession had gone so far in this direction as to say that "not the committing of sin doth cut off any from the church, but refusing to hear the church to reformation," -- and even that excommunicants were not to be avoided in civil society.²

The Article on the relations of separate churches is largely reproduced from the 1596 Confession, but with the authors of this Confession the theory of inter-church cooperation had become practice. The proof-texts in the two statements are different, and the emphases are different. The men who issued the Confession of 1596 were laboring to keep their church alive, and to stay alive themselves. There were few sister churches with which they might associate. But now, the Baptists were quoting Paul, John, and Christ as they bade the body of Christ to make disciples, to baptize them, and to train them. The theory of the Old Testament references (the Psalms and the Song of

1. Article 43, Underhill, op. cit., p. 43.

2. Article 17 and Article 18, ibid., p. 8.

Solomon) had become the missionary imperative of the New Testament, and the Baptist churches of London had already linked themselves together for the carrying out of their commission. Every man among the signers of the Confession of 1644 whom we can trace was "an ar-^{1.}dent evangelist," says Whitley.

6. The Doctrine of Baptism

The subject of Baptism is explicitly developed in three articles in the Confession of 1644, though, of course, the Separatist Confessions had given it no such prominence. First, it is spoken of as "an Ordinance," and never "a Sacrament" as in the Separatist Confession of 1596 and in the Westminster Confession of 1646. Magistracy is likewise called an ordinance in this Confession, but the word is not spelled with a capital "O". The special use of "Ordinance" represents a protest against sacramentalism and against the word "Sacrament."^{2.} Baptism is defined as a New Testament Ordinance, "given by Christ, to be dispensed onely upon persons professing faith, or that are Disciples, or taught, who upon a profession of faith, ought to be baptized."^{3.} This was a definition which Baptists had worked out for themselves; they held it to be founded on the most solid scriptural rock; they believed it to the extent that they were willing to part from their Separatist brethren for its establishment, and to venture a new movement. Believers' baptism stood in the center of their conception of the Church, and was the keystone of all that was peculiar to their doctrinal system. The remarkable truce between the Arminian Baptists and their Calvinistic brethren

1. History of British Baptists, p. 89.

2. This usage of "Ordinance" to describe Baptism and the Supper still persists among most Baptists, especially in America.

3. Article 39, McGlothlin, op. cit., p. 185.

in a most opinionated and controversial age can be accounted for only by their agreement on the central importance of believers' baptism. It is not too much to say that each group was lifted out of obscurity and almost certain defeat by its stubborn clinging to this doctrine which to Baptists has ever seemed to stand in the closest proximity to the vital heart of the Kingdom of God on earth.

By their study of the Scriptures and by their careful reasoning, these Particular Baptists were led, in and after 1633, to the conclusion that some of them had been wrong in their thinking about the basis of the Church. The Church, they said, was not built upon a Covenant by which the members agreed to walk together in God's ways, -- not built upon any agreement with one another nor even with God, but upon God's act of redemption. Christ had died for them and then had conquered death; out of these facts the Church arose, not out of anything they might do. Once the meaning of Christ's death and resurrection was grasped, once the soul had known the personal experience of salvation, some valid outward expression of the fact¹ was needed. It was clearly at hand: the Baptism of Believers. So Baptism stood as the door into the visible fellowship or company of believers, the church. Baptists did not stand alone in so thinking. The Socinians of the Continent saw the rite only as a ceremony by which the believer testifies his entrance into the Christian Church.² With that the Mennonites agreed. And, Viner has summarized the similar views of Zwingli on the subject as follows:

"The matter in baptism is the union with the church and people

1. Vid. the discussion of Walton, The Gathered Community, pp. 82-83.
 2. Viner, Confessions of Christendom, pp. 250-251.

of God. Baptism is a sacrament signifying, to wit, that the recipient belongs to the church: not that it makes him belong to it, but that it testifies to the people that he already belongs to it." 1.

The General Baptists stated their view plainly: "... every church is to receive in all their members by baptism, upon the confession of their faith, and sins."

Certainly Baptism was to these Baptists more than the door into the church. Article 40 urges that it

"being a signe, must answer the things signified, which are these: the washing the whole soule in the bloud of Christ: Secondly, that interest the saints have in the death, buriall, and resurrection; thirdly, together with a confirmation of our faith, that as certainly as the body is buried under water, and riseth againe, so certainly shall the bodies of the Saints be raised by the power of Christ, in the day of the Resurrection, to reigne with Christ." 2.

The General Baptist Confession of 1611 offered a shorter definition, alike in meaning: Baptism is "the outward manifestation of dying unto sin and walking in newness of life."³ The precursor of both definitions is the statement of Conrad Grebel, the Swiss Anabaptist:

'From the Scriptures we learn that baptism signifies that by faith and the blood of Christ our sins have been washed away, that we have died to sin, and walk in newness of life; that assurance of salvation is through the inner baptism, faith, so that the water does not confirm and increase the faith, as the Wittenburg theologians say, nor does it save.' 4.

It is important to note that, according to the Confession, the person authorized to administer baptism is simply "a preaching Disciple; it being nowhere tied to a particular Church officer, or person extraordinarily sent..."⁵ This idea could not have come from

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1. Viner, op. cit., p. 251 fn.
 2. McGlothlin, op. cit., p. 185.
 3. Article 14, Underhill, op. cit., p. 7.
 4. Quoted in Smithson, The Anabaptists, p. 41.
 5. Article 41, McGlothlin, op. cit., p. 185.

the Separatist company; who but the General Baptists previously held it in England? The 1611 Confession declared that though a congregation consist of

"but two or three ... (they) are the body of Christ, and a whole church; and therefore may, and ought, when they come together, to pray, prophesy, break bread, and administer in all the holy ordinances, although as yet they have no officers, or that their officers should be in prison, sick or by any other means hindered from the church." 1.

This is the first Baptist Confession which pronounces in favor of immersion as the proper mode of baptism. The acceptance by English Baptists of immersion seems to have been a comparatively late thing; and the story of their revival of the ancient practice is one full of interest. The Baptists' rediscovery of immersion at this time was undoubtedly the result of their lengthy consideration of the etymological and historical facts connected with the subject (and, furthermore, immersion fitted the Baptist conception of the Church). However, the Baptists had recently received encouragement from several sources to undertake fresh study of the whole question^{2.} of baptism.

While there may have been individual Baptists who even years previously had held that baptism should be by immersion,^{3.} the conviction was reached by a whole group of Particular Baptists in 1642, and they decided the time was ripe for acting openly upon their conviction. Their decision was tied up with an unprecedented political crisis. Early in January, 1642 (the eleventh month of 1641 by the old style of reckoning) five members of the Commons were impeached,

1. Article 11, Underhill, op. cit., p. 6.

2. For an account of these sources and of the revival of the practice of immersion by English Baptists see Appendix A.

3. Vid. Burrage, C., op. cit., Vol. 1, pp. 378-379, for at least one General Baptist who practiced immersion by 1635.

and at the behest of the Parliament they withdrew into the City. The King himself came with guards into the House of Commons the next day to arrest the impeached members. No king had ever dared so invade the Commons, and this act was seen as a flagrant violation of parliamentary liberty. The people clamored their protest as the King returned; troops were called out to maintain order; the House removed to the City, only to be escorted back by the soldiers to Westminster,-- whence the King also had withdrawn. In these confused days the Baptists saw their opportunity to declare their faith in the most effective way of all. They had a spectacular baptism in the old Ford through the River Lea at Bow, Richard Blunt and John Blacklock¹ baptizing twenty-two men and nineteen women. A few days later, on January 11, there was another baptism of eight men and four women; those baptized this time being members of the churches of Jessey and Barbon. If there were any earlier baptisms by immersion, they were performed secretly. These baptisms of 1642, however, were meant to be advertised, and they did encourage discussion and criticism. Previously the objection of their critics had been to the Baptists' assumption of the right to baptize and to their insistence upon the baptism of believers only; now the form of the rite itself came in for criticism. The name Baptist came to take on a more definite meaning.

The first of the baptismal services of 1642 was, within a fortnight, reported in The Book of Common Prayer now Used in the Church

1. Whitley, "A Word, a Thought, a Deed," in The Chronicle, October, 1943, pp. 166-170.

of England, vindicated from the Aspersions of all Schismatiques,
Anabaptists, Brownists, and Separatists, as

"The discovery of a base sect of people called Rebaptists, lately found out in Hackney Marsh neere London. About a Fortnight since a great multitude of people were met going towards the river in Hackney Marsh, and were followed to the waterside, where all were Baptized again, themselves doing it one to another, some which persons, were so feeble and aged, that they were fayne to Ride on Horseback thithere this was wel observed by many of the Inhabitants living there abouts...."

Within two months of this event, Edward Barber, a London General Baptist leader, published the first pamphlet in English on the subject: A Small Treatise of Baptism or Dipping. Wherein is clearly shewed that the Lord Jesus ordained dipping for those only that profess repentance and faith. So the General Baptists, too, had been giving much thought recently to the subject. Here we have one of many evidences that the two streams of Baptist life were in close association, however strongly General and Particular Baptists may have urged their respective theological viewpoints. Apparently immersion was not an entirely new idea with Barber, for when he published A Small Treatise... he reported that he had recently been in prison "for denying the sprinkling of infants" and for opposing^{1.} tithes. From this time on there was unanimity on the subject in both groups of Baptists. Beyond them the matter was under consideration: we hear of three of the six leaders of the Hubbard-How-More mixed (i.e., containing both paedobaptists and anti-paedobaptist Church declaring before the House of Lords their acceptance of baptism by immersion, and of their efforts to convince their church.^{2.}

1. A Small Treatise of Baptism, p. 30

2. "The Hubbard-How-More Church," in Transactions Baptist Hist. Soc., Vol. 2, (1910-1911), p. 44 fn.

Subsequent developments on the subject of immersion came quickly. One of the first things the Long Parliament did when it met in November, 1640, was to appoint an Assembly drawn from its two houses and with ministers named by itself. The Scots also sent five commissioners. The business of the Assembly was to decide upon the future constitution of the Church of England. Parliament addressed several questions to the Assembly, and when they had been discussed and answered by the Assembly, the answers usually became law. In spite of some objection in the Assembly, the principle of religious uniformity was retained; but, in its application difficulties appeared at once. For the present the Assembly was trying to act as a spiritual court for the country, and all kinds of problems were being addressed to this court. One problem much in the public mind was the the mode of baptism to be used in the Church of England; and concerning it John Tombes boldly challenged the Assembly.¹ He made no impression on that body, but the issue was filling the air. John Etherington, in May, 1644, published The Anabaptists Groundwork for Reformation, which presented and attempted to destroy the contention of the Baptists. He asked Lamb "and the rest of these Baptists or Dippers, that will not be called Anabaptists" what rule they had for their manner of dipping. Lamb, the General Baptist, answered; and in September there appeared a new champion of the Baptists in the person of the Reverend Francis Cornwell, M.A.. He took up to the House of Commons his work, The vindication of the royal commission of King James: Believe and be dipped, Marke 16:16, and for his

1. Clark, History of Nonconformity, Vol. 1, p. 345.

1.
trouble was thrown into prison. Soon other ministers of the Church of England declared themselves in agreement with Cornwell.

Meanwhile the Assembly faced the question. It was taken for granted that baptism was for infants. As for the mode, twenty-four votes were cast for dipping, twenty-five for sprinkling, "one of Calvin's innovations" as a British writer calls it.^{2.} Cramp^{3.} suggests that the majority of one was due to the great influence of Dr. Lightfoot, the oriental and biblical scholar, and to fear of possible consequences if dipping were agreed upon. Some people might rush to the conclusion that those who had been only sprinkled ought to be immersed, and so the interests of the Baptists might be furthered. Neale, in referring to the discussions in the Assembly about baptism, says that the opinion of the Baptists 'began to increase wonderfully out of doors.'^{4.} Pottinger says, "Probably there never was a period in the history of England when the practice of adult baptism by immersion made more rapid or more general progress than during the civil wars and the Commonwealth."^{5.} To members of the Assembly conditions seemed bad enough by 1644. Baptists were blamed in part, no doubt, for the state described by Baillie: 'In the greatest parish in London, scarce one child in a year was brought to the church for baptism.'^{6.} More than that, the Baptists kept getting unexpected new help. Samuel Richardson discovered and issued, on February 25, 1645, four passages from a book of Dr. Featley of 1636, one of which

1. Whitley, "A Word, a Thought, a Deed," in The Chronicle, October, 1943, pp. 172-173.

2. Ibid., p. 172.

3. History of the Baptists, pp. 276-277.

4. Quoted in Pottinger, Historical Sketch of the Baptist Denomination, pp. 6-7.

5. Pottinger, ibid.

6. Evans, Early English Baptists, Vol. 2, p. 140 fn., quoting from a letter of Baillie.

said, 'Whatsoever is alleged for dipping, we approve of'^{1.} And another minister, Henry Burton, who had been mutilated and exiled for opposing Laud, and who had been welcomed back to London as a popular hero following the overthrow of Laud, came upon a little book of Leonard Busher, a plea for religious liberty, and published it.^{2.} This was the great issue into which the baptism controversy moved: whether Uniformity was to be enforced or liberty of conscience allowed.

7. Liberty of Conscience

On Liberty of Conscience the Confession of 1644 speaks in no uncertain terms. Like the Separatists of 1596, the Baptists first declared themselves to be law-abiding and loyal citizens; their assertion of allegiance to King and Parliament is prominent. Then they added,

"although we should suffer never so much from them (King and Parliament) in not actively submitting to some ecclesiastical laws, which might be conceived by them to be their duties to establish, which we for the present could not see, nor our consciences could submit unto; yet are we bound to yield our persons to their pleasures."^{3.}

Article 51, however, is a clearer outline of their conduct in case "God with-hold the Magistrates allowance" and favor. They "must notwithstanding proceed together in Christian communion, not daring to give place to suspend our practice, but to walk in obedience to Christ...." Three years had not passed before they had to act on this declaration. On March 18, 1647, they called a meeting of their churches to decide what was to be done in view of Parliament's pass-

1. Whitley, "A Word, a Thought, a Deed," loc. cit.

2. Whitley, A Baptist Bibliography, p. 7. The Burton edition appeared in 1646.

3. Article 49, McGlothlin, op. cit., p. 187.

ing an act to suppress all sects. Their consistent conclusion was that they would go on with their meetings and ministries, even if forced to leave the kingdom.^{1.}

Not for the world would the Particular Baptists include in their Confession Article 39 of the Separatist Confession:

"That it is the office and duty of Princes and magistrates ... to suppress and root out by their authoritie all false ministries, voluntarie Relligions and counterfeit worship of God... and on the other hand to establish & mayntein by their lawes every part of Gods word...."

Like their Arminian brethren they were convinced that the State should have no authority over conscience or religion, that Church and State should be separate. So they said in the last Article of their Confession, "And thus we desire to give unto God that which is Gods, and unto Cesar that which is Cesars, and unto all men that which belongeth unto them...."^{2.} Nor is that last phrase dwarfed in importance by the two preceding it: no less than three times the Confession says that "unto all men" is to be given whatsoever is their due. The freedom which the authors claimed for themselves they held to be the common human right.

8. The Place of Preaching

There is a strong emphasis throughout the 1644 Confession on preaching. Article 24 says "Faith is ordinarily begotten by the preaching of the gospel, or word of Christ...." This straightforward statement finds its parallel only in the General Baptist contention that confession is "wrought by the preaching of the gospel."^{3.} These statements might not be considered worthy of

1. Vid. The Anabaptists late Protestation (1647), British Museum.

2. Article 52.

3. Article 13, Confession of 1611, Underhill, op. cit., p. 7.

special notice except that something is known of the peculiar worth which the early Baptists saw in preaching. They stood alone in England in the extent to which they urged that any of their members with gifts might preach and minister. The Particular Baptists said,

"Also such to whom God hath given gifts being tryed in the Church may and ought ... to prophesie, according to the proportion of faith, and so teach publickly the Word of God, for the edification, exhortation, and comfort of the Church." 1.

2.

In this they followed the theory of the Confession of 1596, but they contradicted and went beyond the practice of the Separatists and Independents in saying that non-official preachers might baptize and administer the Supper. The Separatists held that preachers were to be appointed to the office of "Prophecie" by the congregation, yet they must not administer the Ordinances without ordination; but the Baptists held that preachers need not hold any office . 3.

This emphasis on preaching was not original with the Particular Baptists, nor with the Separatists. The very word "prophecy," which both of them used, suggests Dutch Anabaptist origins, and certainly the first General Baptists used the term and pioneered in the practice of lay-preaching. Baillie reported in 1645 that 'many more of their women do venture to preach among the Baptists than among the Brownists, in England.' 4. General Baptist growth is to be explained largely as the result of lay-preaching activity. Lay-preaching was very popular, and soon a great controversy arose with the Church of England ministry and the Presbyterians about the propriety of such

1. Article 45, Confession of 1644, McGlothlin, op. cit., p. 186.

2. Article 34, Walker, op. cit., pp. 69-70.

3. Article 41, Confession of 1644, McGlothlin, op. cit., p. 185.

4. Barclay, op. cit., p. 157, quoting from Anabaptism the True Foundation of Independency..., p. 30.

a ministry. When, in 1644, Captain John Garland and James Cocayne (General Baptists) were examined by a minister, who had his commission from a council of war at Stafford, for preaching at Ipstones, they were not first accused of doctrinal heresy, but of claiming that 'the Scriptures allowed every man to preach who had ability.'¹ On this, Baptist agreement was unanimous.

9. Omissions of the Confession

Finally, some omissions of the Confession should be noted. The document was far from perfect with regard to completeness, but some omissions were intentional. There is, for example, no mention of close-communion in this first edition, though all later editions clearly prescribe that believers are "after (baptism) to partake of the Lord's Supper." Did the seven London churches decide in favor of close-communion between 1644 and 1646? Haste must not be made toward this conclusion, especially in view of the accession to London Particular Baptist ranks of several prominent men of open-communion convictions during that period. Possibly the presence of some dissenting voices accounts for the silence of the 1644 Confession on the subject; but, by 1646 most London Baptists had reasoned to the close-communion position. The Separatists permitted only believing members to participate in the Supper. None but believers belonged to Baptist churches, so, it was held, only they should be concerned with the Ordinances. If the problem of having to break with believers in Independent groups gave them pause for a time, they were now ready to say that the Ordinances belonged to

1. "Baptist Gleanings in Stafford," in The Baptist Quarterly, Vol. 3 (1926-1927), p. 191.

churches and not to individuals, and that separation to local church life need not break the fellowship of believers of differing convictions. Beside, the seven churches had the example of the General Baptists in this too, whose conclusion from the beginning had been that baptism "in no-wise appertaineth to infants,"^{1.} and the Supper, likewise concerns only "Christ and the faithful."^{2.}

A final proof of the inflexible position taken by the seven churches on close-communion is seen in the fact that when the representatives met to prepare a second edition of the Confession in 1646 Henry Jessey was not invited to join them. Certainly by that time Jessey was a convinced Baptist, but he was one of the small group of Baptist leaders who advocated open-communion, and so he was considered unorthodox by the seven churches.^{3.} The open-communion group, of which John Tombes and Henry Jessey were the best examples in the Commonwealth period, were willing to compromise in several matters that they might more perfectly preserve their fraternal relationship with the Independent paedobaptists. Whitley suggests that their action represented "a clinging to higher social life, an attempt to hold fast every element of culture, and prove their devotion to the will of God was compatible with doing that will in the world."^{4.}

There is little in the Confession about Eschatology -- less detail than in either the 1596 Confession or the Westminster Confession. Article 20 presents the subject in general terms:

"This Kingdome shall be then fully perfected when hee shall the second time come in glory to reigne amongst his Saints, and to

1. Article 14, Underhill, op. cit., p.7.

2. Article 15, Ibid.

3. Blomfield, "Yorkshire Baptist Churches in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries," in The Baptists of Yorkshire, p. 56.

4. History of British Baptists, pp. 101-102.

be admired of all them that doe beleieve, when he shall put down all rule and authority under his feet, that the glory of the Father may be full and perfectly manifested in his Sonne, and the glory of the Father and the Sonne in all his members."

The authors may have worked out for themselves a more elaborate eschatology than this, but, in view of the tragic messianism of some continental Anabaptists to which they also were said by their enemies to be committed, they thought they had better say as little about the subject as possible. By a brief general statement about eschatology they would confound those who were saying the Baptists were fanatics on the subject.

It will also be noted that these Particular Baptists offered no definition of the Lord's Supper. This possibly was due to the fact that there was not full agreement among themselves on the meaning of the Ordinance. If most of them held a Zwinglian view that the Supper was simply a memorial service, others preferred a more Calvinistic interpretation; so they decided not even to say with the General Baptists that the Supper is "the outward manifestation of the spiritual communion between Christ and the faithful, mutually to declare his death until he come,"^{1.} but to leave the matter out. There was room for difference regarding understanding of the Supper.

10. A Summary of Particular and General Baptist Agreement

By way of summary, it may be said that Separatists, General Baptists, and Particular Baptists in their earliest Confessions stood close together, in spite of the reputed Arminianism of the second group; and that at points in the Confessions at which Particular Baptists disagreed with the Separatists they usually found themselves in agreement with their General brethren. This was not inevitable, for

1. Article 15, Confession of 1611, Underhill, op. cit., p. 7.

the doctrine and practice of the two groups lacked maturity and there were many possibilities of difference between them. But the peculiar identity of conclusion between General Baptists and Particular Baptists on the definition of the Church, the administration of the Ordinances, the place of preaching, the meaning of the "sign" of baptism, the mode of baptism (by 1644), close-communion, church officers, absolute congregational authority, and the freedom of conscience and religion from state-control argues more strongly than has been acknowledged for a unity of origin and a contiguity of life of the two groups. The kinship of their first Confessions was made even clearer with the appearance of the Second Edition of the London Confession in 1646. That document synchronizes with the 1611 Confession in adding concluding Articles on Oaths and Office-holding and on the Resurrection, and agrees with it on its positions on these subjects. The two groups had much more in common than the despised name "Anabaptist."

IV. Later Use and Importance of the Confession

1.

The Confession was evidently received immediately by London Particular Baptists as a worthy doctrinal standard and as a basis for co-operation among the churches. What about its reception by the London General Baptists? Did they pay any attention to it? Since, during the Commonwealth Period, a statement of its beliefs by one of the groups of Baptists seems to have drawn a corresponding statement from the other, we would expect a response on the part of the General Baptists to this first Particular Baptist Confession. Only disappointment has been the reward of the search for a confession of faith of General

Baptist churches before 1651. Now, however, it does appear that a document of twenty-four pages which was noted by Dr. Whitley in his ^{1.} A Baptist Bibliography, and which is to be found only in the British Museum, ^{2.} was a response of London General Baptists, "Printed in the yeare 1645." This pamphlet is called The Fountaine of Free Grace Opened by Questions and Answers ... by the Congregation of Christ in London constituted by Baptisme upon the profession of Faith, falsly called Anabaptists. There can be little doubt that this was the work of more than one local congregation, and that General Baptist churches in London were working as a unit in 1645.

The pamphlet is primarily a defense of the distinguishing doctrine that Christ suffered for the sins of all, but more than that, it is an apology for the separate existence of the group. The authors assert that, due to some "notorious errours" of "the Arminians," many have been caused "to thinke evill of this doctrine (general election), and of us..."; thus they have been led to a fresh study and "searching" with the result that they now wish to "manifest the excellent worth" of the truth as they see it, to "ourselves and others." ^{3.} There is no direct reference to the Confession of 1644 nor to the Particular Baptists, but that is not surprising. Before 1660 the two groups of Baptists were strongly averse to disputation with one another; they chose the easier way of comparative isolation. It is when we come to the contents of The Fountaine of Free Grace Opened that the conclusion presents itself that in the one important point about which General Baptists could not agree with the Confession of 1644, they were

1. P. 19.

2. Misc. Pamphlet E 1181(3)

3. Vid. preface: "To the impartiall reader."

laboring to set their Particular brethren straight. That they wished to accomodate, in so far as possible, to the Particular Baptist position is seen in the startling fact that they set themselves over against "the Arminians," utterly renouncing "scandalous aspersions" that they held free-will and denied a free election of grace. What they did deny was that the rejection of the doctrine of original sin and the holding of the doctrines of free-will and "Falling away" are necessary and direct consequences of the teaching that Christ suffered for the sins of all.

The authors were not afraid of the language of Calvinism and probably used it advisedly. One question they asked was, "Could not Christ have effected, that all should have believed?" and answered,

"He could if he would, but his suffering for all doth not necessarily enforce that he must work faith in all, he was free in giving of himself to suffer and he is free also in quickening the soules of those he will." 1.

Again, they asked, "But are not the elect justified in the purpose of God from all eternity?" Their answer was,

"No more than they are called and glorified from all eternity.... Heere we must distinguish betwixe the decree of God and the execution of the same decree, the appoyntment to doe a thing, and the doing of the same according to the appoyntment: God did appoynt for to justifie his Elect in time, and when the time is come, God doth accordingly effect the same by giving them Faith thereby making them partakers of union with Christ, and thereby of Reconciliation, Adoption, and Justification." 2.

The strongest objection against the Calvinistic doctrine that Christ died only for believers, they said, was a practical one:

"That it is no good tydings to the world which doe not beleeve: neither will such a doctrine worke faith, whereas Christ hath appoynted a Gospell of remission of sins by his death to be

1. Page 3.
2. Page 23.

preached to the world, to the begetting of persons to the faith of that truth." 1.

The arguments were clear and well reasoned. Had the General Baptists disagreed with the 1644 Confession on any important points except the one named, it is quite likely they would have stated their convictions at this time. Their pamphlet of 1645 attracted attention outside their circle, for in the same year appeared from the hands of certain of their opponents a libelous parallel, The Anabaptists Catechisme... published according to Order of their Conventicles. According to the Catechisme the Baptists claimed some of the most monstrous opinions as their dearest convictions.

2.

The Confession was received outside the Baptist fellowship with unequalled surprise. People generally were amazed at the moderation and sanity of its views; indeed, its orthodoxy appeared most remarkable. Some, on the other hand, refused to believe that the Confession fairly represented Baptist views; others singled out for special attack an article here and there with which they did not agree, and so sought to bring the whole into disrepute.

3.

The strongest attack on the first edition of the London Confession came from Dr. Daniel Featley, brilliant liberal clergyman of the Church of England, who devoted to it the last chapter of his book, The Dippers dipt. or, The Anabaptists duck't and plunged Over Head and Eares, at a Disputation in Southwark (1645). Featley was a famous scholar, and had been a member of the Westminster Assembly; but, like

1. P. 17.

others of his party, he had come under suspicion of disloyalty and had been imprisoned at the behest of Parliament. In prison the Baptists were again brought forcibly to his attention by the presence of a fellow-prisoner, Henry Denne, the influential General Baptist preacher.^{1.} In prison, Featley, having time on his hands, worked over some notes of a disputation he had had with William Kiffin in 1642.^{2.} These he included in the above scurrilous work, in which he devoted several chapters to the errors and extravagances of the continental Anabaptists of the previous century.^{3.} This book was to go through six editions. The English Anabaptists, it said, inherited all the evils of continental Anabaptism, and those evils would soon burst in full-grown fury upon England. Featley named six articles of the Confession as heretical.

In Article 31 he said the words "Whatsoever the Saints, any of them doe possess or enjoy of God in this life, is onely by faith" reproduced an ancient error, and he attempted to prove from Scripture that the possession of property was not of God's grace but by legal earthly right. Article 38 he said was presented in ambiguous language. If the Baptists meant that the law should never be called into action in case of refusal to support church officers (which they did), then they were guilty of awful heresy. On reading the Article on Believers' Baptism he lighted on the word "onely" ("onely upon persons professing faith"), and called this plain "Anabaptisticall doctrine." But, he said, remove that word, and the Article would not be objectionable.

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1. McGlothlin, W.J., "Dr. Daniel Featley and the First Calvinistic Baptist Confession," in The Review and Expositor, Oct., 1909, p. 580.
 2. Langley, A.S., "Seventeenth Century Baptist Disputations," in Transactions Baptist Hist. Soc., Vol. 6 (1918-19), pp. 216-243. Langley here holds the debate was with Kiffin; McGlothlin (Baptist Confessions, p. 190) says it was with "the General Baptists."
 3. Whitley, A Baptist Bibliography, p. 19.

Article 40 concerns the mode of baptism. "This Article, " said Featley, "is wholly sowed with the new leaven of Anabaptism..."; and while he did not object to immersion, he did object to the position that it is the only scriptural mode. Naturally he had the strongest objection to Article 41, and said that only officers had any right to administer Ordinances. Finally, he objected to the word "prophecy" in Article 45, tracing it and the fanaticism which he supposed ever^{1.} to accompany it to the lay-preaching of the continental Anabaptists.

In consequence of the attack by so famous a man as Featley, and especially because his book had been dedicated to Parliament, then the ruling body of the country, the Baptists would have to reply. Henry Denne challenged Featley to a public disputation in prison. The debate began but Featley soon gave it up, saying it was dangerous to debate without a license. Denne then hastened to publish, for the public defense of the Baptists, Antichrist Unmasked..., and Samuel Richardson followed with a volume, Some brief considerations on Doctor Featley his book entituled The Dipper Dipt....^{2.} But the chief concern of the moment was not public opinion, but the attitude of Parliament following reception of Featley's book. Therefore the Baptists of London holding Calvinistic views decided to work over their Confession, changing as far as possible the language to which Featley objected, and rearranging all the material for the sake of clarity. The revision was carefully and thoroughly made -- so thoroughly, indeed, that much of the distinctive Baptist emphasis was removed from some of the articles.

With most of Featley's objections the Baptists dealt not by deny-

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1. These objections are discussed at some length by McGlothlin, "Dr. Daniel Featley...", op.cit., pp. 584-586.
 2. Whitley, A Baptist Bibliography, p. 19.

ing their former positions, but by simply leaving unsaid words which pointed out sharply their convictions. They agreed that people who have no faith have a civil right to property; they had not denied that. From Article 39 they omitted the word "onely," but still said that baptism should be "dispensed upon persons professing faith." They reiterated their belief in immersion, but since Featley had objected to their Scripture references concerning it, they left the references out! In Article 41 they trimmed "preaching Disciple" to plain "disciple," but added the phrase, "Being men able to preach the Gospel."

Concerning Article 38, they thought the safest way was to omit entirely the offending statement, since it concerned only a hypothetical case anyway, and to declare in a later article their principle of religious freedom. Here they would only assert the right of ministers to local support, with which Featley agreed. They could go on maintaining their position under the Article, if not by the Article. McGlothlin seems to have overlooked Article 48 in the new edition when he expresses great surprise at the willingness of the authors here to surrender "The Baptist point of religious freedom and separation of Church and State...."¹ The Baptist principle, instead of being surrendered, however, is stated with new directness in Article 48:

"So it is the magistrates duty to tender the liberty of men's consciences ... and we believe it to be our express duty, especially in matters of religion, to be fully persuaded in our minds of the lawfulness [sic] of what we do ... and as we cannot do anything contrary to our understandings and consciences, so neither can we forbear the doing of that which our understandings and consciences bind us to do; and if the magistrate

1. Vid. The Review and Expositor, October, 1909, p. 587.

should require us to do otherwise, we are to yield our persons in a passive way to their power...." 1.

The authors thought that Featley's objection to the word "prophecy" was not too important, and the term did best describe lay-preaching (which they meant to go on doing whatever the cost), so they kept it. Some of the changes they were making seemed to belie their strength of conviction, but then, this edition was not being sent out as general propaganda, nor to edify Baptists; it had one primary purpose, to refute the serious charges of Dr. Featley and by so doing to convince Parliament that the Baptists were not a seditious or heretical group. The edition had to show the broad basis of agreement which the Baptists had with the orthodox Reformed churches. For Baptists the times were fraught with peril: a single decision of Parliament against their orthodoxy might turn the whole country against them. They might, at a single stroke, be declared enemies of Church and State and be banished from the realm.² But having for a short season tasted some of the fruits of freedom, they did not mean to be driven underground again by persecution.

Changes in the new edition apart from those directly occasioned by Dr. Featley's criticism included statements denying free will and falling from grace, a stronger declaration in favor of election, and a statement of the doctrine (without use of the terms) of original sin. This strengthening of the Calvinism of the Confession was probably due to the efforts of two ex-clergymen, Benjamin Cox and Hanserd Knollys, who had recently become identified with the London Baptists.

1. Underhill, op. cit., p. 45.

2. In his Epistle Dedicatory to The Dippers dipt Featley had suggested, "Of all heretics and schismatics the Anabaptists ought to be most carefully looked into, and severely punished, if not utterly exterminated and banished out of the church and kingdom...."

1.

Cox especially was a strong Calvinist. A new Article on Providence, stressing God's benevolence as well as his justice, was added:

"God in his infinite power and wisdom, doth dispose all things to the end for which they were created, that neither good nor evil befalls any by chance, or without his providence; and that whatever befalls the elect, is by his appointment, for his glory, and their good." 2.

3.

In the definition of Sanctification the believer is said to press after "a heavenly and evangelical obedience," rather than after "a heavenly and evangelical perfection." Concerning freedom of conscience there is a fearless declaration in "The Conclusion ":

"But if any man shall impose upon us any thing that we see not to be commanded by our Lord Jesus Christ, we should in his strength, rather embrace all reproaches and tortures of men, to be stript of all outward comforts, and if it were possible to die a thousand deaths, rather than doe any thing against the least tittle of the truth of God, or against the light of our own consciences." 4.

If that kind of conviction would not impress Parliament, it would not be impressed at all by the Baptists.

4.

In the Preface to the Second Edition the Baptists attempted to answer some of the sincere criticisms of their position which they had heard: sedition and mutiny, preaching outside of churches, neglecting the services of the Church of England, their small numbers (indicating error!), their untrained preachers, and the lack of unity among themselves (On this point they asked, what about the paedobaptists, who are papists, Arians, Lutherans, Episcopalians, Calvinists, Hussites, and many others?). Before the Preface, however, they placed

1. Whitley, Calvinism and Evangelism in England, pp. 17-18.

2. Article 5, Underhill, op. cit., p. 29.

3. Article 29, Ibid., p. 35.

4. Underhill, op. cit., p. 48.

a straight-forward, brief Epistle Dedicatory "To the Right Honourable the Lords, Knights, Citizens, and Burgesses in Parliament assembled." Addressing the Parliament as "Right Honourable and most Noble Patriots," they began:

"Inasmuch as there hath been a book lately presented unto you, in whose dedicatory epistle there are many heinous accusations unjustly and falsely laid against us, we conceive it necessary to make some declaration of our innocency, and (to the end) humbly to present unto your view this confession of faith: here we unfeignedly declare, what in our hearts we judge, and what we teach, and according to this rule we desire and endeavor, through the grace of God, to lead our lives."

In a short but noble Conclusion they reiterated that they were "no ways dangerous or troublesome to human Society," and confessed that,

"we know but in part, and that we are ignorant of many things which we desire and seek to know: and if any will doe us that friendly part to shew us from the word of God that we see not, we shall have cause to be thankful to God and to them." 1.

This Second Edition was subscribed in behalf of the same seven congregations represented by the First, and a French congregation "of the same judgment," by two representatives from each. The names of Thomas Skippard, John Webb, Joseph Phelps, and Edward Heath, who had signed the earlier Edition, do not appear on this Edition; but their place is taken by Hanserd Knollys, Thomas Holms, Benjamin Coches (or Cox), and the two French ministers, Denis le Barbier and Christoph le Duret .

The French congregation represented in the Edition seems to have had its beginnings in a split in the French Reformed congregation in London. It was reported to the Westminster Assembly that on December 22, 1643, two members of that group, a doctor and an ex-monk, had 'made a fearful rent and **scism**,' and were gathering churches of their

1. McGlothlin, Baptist Confessions of Faith, p. 194.

own. The French authorities asked the Assembly to seek assistance from Parliament on the matter; and again on April 5, 1644, the Assembly petitioned the Commons on behalf of the French church.^{1.} The French who became Baptists may have been influenced by William Kiffin, the Baptist merchant-pastor. We hear of his receiving, later in the period, "a numerous French family of considerable rank," furnishing it a home and servants, and "entirely maintaining" the exiles at his own expense.^{2.} There also appeared later a certain Theodore Naudin, an influential French refugee, in the church of Dr. Chamberlen.^{3.}

How would Parliament receive the revised Confession? The Baptists were apprehensive, for there was evidence that the efforts of the Assembly to have Parliament declare against them had made progress. On September 19, 1644, the Assembly had submitted to the Commons 'their conceptions for suppressing of Antinomianism and Anabaptism.' Three days earlier, Baillie wrote,

'We spent a number of sessions on some propositions of advice for suppressing Antinomians, Anabaptists, and those who preach liberty for all religions. Even in these our good Independents found us great difficulty....' 4.

The Commons had done nothing for a while, but at length, on November 15, it was decided that no unordained person might preach, except those on trial for the ministry. But the conduct of the Commons in 1645 seemed more forbidding. On May 20, information was given against Hanserd Knollys for "preaching in private" and for Antinomian opinions. Also in May, a committee had been appointed to notify Parliament about

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1. Carruthers, The Everyday Work of the Westminster Assembly, p. 40.
 2. Orme, Remarkable Passages in the Life of William Kiffin, p. 161.
 3. "Chamberlain's First-Day Church," in Transactions Baptist Hist. Society, Vol. 2 (1910-1911), pp. 190-191.
 4. Carruthers, supra, p. 98.

'such as preach Arminianism and against the Sabbath.' In August the Assembly was aroused anew at hearing of ministers 'revolting to Anabaptism and yet maintaining their public ministry.'¹ By 1645 the Assembly had obtained from Parliament Resolutions which in effect declared the Presbyterian system to be the one needful for England.

"It was the Assembly, not the Parliament, that took in hand the threads out of which the pattern of events, on their religious side, was woven; and the Parliament ... did little more than serve the Assembly's ends." 2.

Thus Presbyterianism was moving to its climax in England in 1646. Its way was not unimpeded, however; and the Baptists succeeded, because Presbyterian uniformity was never realized, in getting finally a favorable answer from Parliament.

By 1647 "toleration" was clearly the chief point at issue between the Presbyterians and the Independents, and the Independents were carrying the day in its favor. So on March 4 of that year Parliament declared:

'The name of Anabaptism hath indeed contracted much odium, by reason of the extravagant opinions and practices we abhor and detest. But for their opinion against the baptism of infants, it is only a difference about a circumstance of time in the administration of an ordinance, wherein in former ages, as well as this, learned men have differed both in opinion and practice. And though we could wish that all men would satisfy themselves, and join with us in our judgment and practice on this point, yet herein we hold it fit that men should be convinced by the Word of God, with great gentleness and reason, and not beaten out of it with force and violence.' 3.

The London Confession had been instrumental in securing legal toleration for the Baptists.

The opponents of the Baptists were not silenced, of course, by

1. Carruthers, op. cit., p. 99.

2. Clark, History of Nonconformity, Vol. 1, p. 333.

3. Quoted in Cramp, Baptist History, pp. 276-277. I have not been able to locate this "Declaration" mentioned by Cramp. It may have been issued in immediate response to the joint Congregational-Anabaptist declaration of 1647.

the Edition of 1645. In that same year it drew two of the most scathing responses. First, Thomas Bakewell published An Answer or Confutation of Divers Errours Broached and Maintained by the Seven Churches of Anabaptists. Contained in those Articles of their Confession Presented to Parliament.... Bakewell went beyond Featley's criticism of the First Edition in objecting to nineteen Articles of the Second Edition. His systematic criticism seems to have been prepared in consequence of the act of John Spilsbury, during the course of a debate with him, in setting forth the Confession as the standard of Baptist^{1.} belief. Second, Robert Baillie produced his alarming one hundred and seventy-nine-pages-study called, Anabaptism the true Foundation of Independency. He urged that the Baptists' statements were not to be believed:

"The Confession of Faith which the other year seven of their congregations did put forth, and of late again in the second corrected edition have set out with a bold preface to both the houses of Parliament, may no more be taken for the measure of their faith than that Confession which their elder brethren did print not long ago in the name of their company." 2.

Baillie continued:

"The London Anabaptists' Confession is such an one as I believe thousands of our new anabaptists will be far from owning, as any man may be able to say without a spirit of divination, knowing that their usual and received doctrines do much more agree with the anabaptists in Germany, than with that handful who made this Confession. ... We wish that all those who go under the name of Anabaptists in England, were resolved to stand to the articles of that confession without any further progress in error: but how far the very prime subscribers are from any such resolution, it will appear anon."

In Chapter III Baillie named the tenets of English Anabaptists, having, evidently, obtained his information from their antagonists. He said

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1. Bakewell indicates this in the introductory remarks to An Answer or Confutation....
 2. The Confession of "their elder brethren" here referred to was probably the Independent's An Apologetical Narration.

every Anabaptist is at least a Separatist; Anabaptists put all church power in the hands of the people; they let any gifted members preach and administer the sacraments "out of all office"; they refuse to preach in "Steeple-houses"; they celebrate the Lord's Supper in common inns; they deny all power to magistrates in anything which concerns religion; they press a liberty for preaching and propagating all errors imaginable; they say that Parliament must be abolished; they profess their design to overthrow from the ground the government of the State as it now stands; they hate the covenant; and they are injurious to the Scots (!). By 1646, however, the Baptists were becoming better known, and they weathered the attacks without voicing more than individual protests.

5.

Shortly after the publication of the Second Edition, on November 30, 1646, Benjamin Cox (Oxford graduate and former clergyman of the Church of England) published twenty-two Articles in elaboration on some points of the Confession, or, as he calls his work, An Appendix to a Confession of Faith. He had signed the new Edition, and Underhill supposes he had helped to revise it. Most of the changes in that Edition had represented a stiffening of its Calvinism; and the twenty-two Articles are characterized by an even stiffer Calvinism. Cox says his work was "occasioned by the inquiry of some well-affected and godly persons in the country," and that it was "published for the further clearing of the Truth."

Beside being a strong Calvinist, Cox was a lucid expositor. He says that the result of the Fall "was not a laying of the whole person

1. Confessions of Faith, p. 10.

in the dust, or grave, eternally without life or sense," but it was eternal "indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish"; that the eternity of the punishment of the wicked is an absolute eternity; that election alone is responsible for man's belief in Christ; and that Christ never intended to forgive any but his sheep. He answers the assertion of some who say that those who hold the preceeding doctrines have no Gospel to preach by saying that it is indeed the obligation of Christians to preach to all, for there are those who "hereafter shall believe." He insists that God regards the human will, but He causes men of "new heart" to will obedience and faith. The Christian's relation to the Law and to good works is defined. Baptism is said to be a matter of obedience, not essential to salvation, but a means of great "benefit" to the believer. Cox's definition of the Church is interesting:

"Believers baptized ought to agree and join together in a constant profession of the same doctrine of the gospel, and in professed obedience thereunto, and also in fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. And a company of baptized believers so agreeing and joining together, are a church or congregation of Christ."

He admits that men have not full light, but they should use the light they have; and they know at least, he says, that they should obey God rather than man.^{1.} McGlothlin^{2.} thinks these Articles were never published with the Confession, but they must have found some immediate use.

6.

Before a third and a fourth Edition of the Confession of 1644 appeared in 1651 and 1652 respectively the position of the Baptists

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1. Underhill, op. cit., pp. 51-60.
 2. Baptist Confessions of Faith, p. 195.

as compared with that of 1646, was greatly altered. In the New Model Army of Cromwell Baptists had distinguished themselves, many of them quickly rising to positions of highest leadership. Overnight they became a principal source of Cromwell's strength; and they had found their new position in the military service to be greatly to their advantage. The Army proved to be the best medium for the spread of their principles that they had yet found. When the brief wars were over, Baptists were almost everywhere in prominent positions. In 1648 they could almost disregard an Ordinance of the Lords and Commons ... for punishing blasphemies and heresies, which practically decreed life-imprisonment for those who held 'That the baptizing of infants is unlawful, or such baptism is void ... and in pursuance thereof shall baptize any person formerly baptized.'¹ King and Parliament held no more fears for them now. Three Baptist pastors Cromwell had named to sit on his ministerial examining committee, the "Triers," and three other members were Baptist laymen.² The Westminster Confession had appeared in 1646, and by comparing the London Baptist Confession with it men could see that the Baptists did indeed belong to the main stream of Reformed church life.

There was now little danger of persecution by the State; but there had appeared a new kind of danger. George Fox found the "Inward Light" in 1647, and Baptists at Mansfield were the first to share his experience and join in initiating the Quaker movement.³ Quakerism had gathered its earliest following in North Lancashire, Westmoreland, and Cumberland, -- and from among Baptist churches.

1. Cramp, Baptist History, pp. 277-278.

2. Whitley, W.T., "Early English Baptists," in The Chronicle, January, 1938, p. 20.

3. Whitley, History of British Baptists, p. 85.

Some of its most ardent apostles were formerly Baptist pastors: John Audland, Francis Howgill, Samuel Fisher, Thomas Taylor, John Wilkin-¹son; and whole Baptist churches had gone over to the Quakers. Indeed, between the Baptist and the Quaker movements there was a most intimate kinship. Barclay says,

"There can be little doubt that the first churches founded by Fox and the early preachers were either constituted upon the principles of the earliest English General Baptist or Mennonite Church, or had a common origin in the scheme of church government and discipline originally received by Menno from the Swiss Baptists and developed by him." 2.

Gooch says of Quakerism that

'to calm observers it is obvious that the new movement most nearly resembled the Mennonite Church whence the Baptists had already sprung. So close is the connection indeed between these sister bodies that it is sometimes said that Fox was rather the organizer than the founder of the new society.' 3.

At any rate, while the General Baptists suffered more from the inroads of the Quakers than did their Calvinistic brethren, the latter were also very conscious of the new danger which they faced. Moreover, rumor was flying about the provinces to the effect that all the Baptist churches of London had fallen away to Quakerism, and this was happening in spite of the fact that Quakerism had made little impression on London by 1651.

To correct this false impression and to reaffirm their faith to the world, London Particular Baptists prepared two new editions of their Confession which they termed "the third Impression corrected" (1651) and "the fourth Impression corrected" (1652). While these

1. "Baptist Gleanings of the Seventeenth Century" (unsigned), in The Baptist Quarterly, Vol. 1 (1922-23), p. 384.

2. Op. cit., p. 352.

3. Collins, W.J., "The General Baptists and the Friends and the Anabaptist Backgrounds," in Transactions Baptist Hist. Soc., Vol. 5 (1916-17), pp. 165-173.

were substantially reprints of the 1646 Edition, the "Epistle Dedicatory" and the "Preface" were replaced by an "Epistle to the Reader." Also, indicating more directly the specific purpose of the new editions, there was appended an address of eight pages,

"To all the Churches of God sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place profess the name of Christ Jesus our Lord, both theirs and ours,"

called "Heart-bleedings for Professors' Abominations." George Fox in emphasizing the authority of the "Inner Light" appeared to have been depreciating the authority of the Scriptures, the atoning work of Christ, and the Ordinances. In him liberty seemed to be running into license, and historical Christianity was being challenged by his movement. In the aptly-phrased "Heart-bleedings" the Baptists, therefore, made an earnest and powerful plea for biblical Christianity and against the views of the Quakers and Ranters. They denied that the Baptist movement naturally runs to such extremes, as some had been saying, and that the Baptists had indeed "gone up to a further attainment and light" (words used to describe conversion to Quakerism). As for those Baptists who had become Quakers, they said that they were never truly Baptists,-- that there is no logical progression from Baptist to Quaker ideas. The address closes with an urgent call to steadfastness in the faith. The fact that one edition was not enough to meet the need would indicate that the Confession now found very wide use over the country, and that it had important influence in the troubled times. The Preface shows that the new editions were called for by churches from many parts of the nation.

The London Particular Baptists in 1651 and 1652 may have thought the Calvinism of the 1646 Edition was a little too strong; or the changes they made concerning their theological outlook may have been made for grammatical reasons only. At any rate, the words "only" and "alone" they omitted from the Article on the Elect: "These only have interest in him, and fellowship with him ... and to them alone doth God by his Spirit apply this redemption unto," though the declaration at the end says that the gift of eternal life is "to them, and none else."¹ The Article concerning the duty of the church to support its ministers is completely omitted, the Quakers by this time having found the evil of "hireling priests" one of their most effective preaching points. The Baptists without a doubt went on supporting their ministers as before, but there was no point in adding fuel to the Quaker fire by setting a somewhat minor matter of church practice to the front in an article of their new editions of the London Confession. Its inclusion might incur further prejudice from some who were already leaning in the direction of the Quakers. The old declaration of loyalty to the King (who was now dead) was, of course, left out; but the government of Cromwell was applauded in the words: "That we have great cause to bless God and to be thankful for the peace and liberty we enjoy in the service of our God under the present government...."²

When Cromwell organized the Regular Army in 1646 into the New Model Army a remarkable proportion of Baptists was found in its ranks.

1. Article 21, Underhill, op. cit., p. 35.

2. Article 48, Underhill, op. cit., p. 45.

Before this, Independency (as Congregationalists and Baptists were classed) had made little progress in the army; but, as he declared to Manchester, Cromwell would not deny but that he 'desired to have none^{1.} in my army but such as were of the Independent judgment.' During the first two years of the life of the New Model Army the Independent minority steadily increased and gradually obtained control, reaching complete ascendancy late in 1647. The Independents brought to this Army a stern determination to win the war by immediate aggressive action, and to secure the civil and ecclesiastical liberty which they had long sought. Baptists advanced rapidly in rank. They wrote the most popular drill-books for both cavalry and infantry; Richard Deane became Comptroller of the ordnance and later general-at-sea, at which post he made the English navy again respected abroad; William Allen became adjutant-general; Richard Lawrence, marshal-general; John Desborough, major-general; Henry Jones, scout-master; Edward Roberts, auditor-general; Philip Carteret, advocate-general; and Thomas Harrison organized and commanded the militia which drove Charles I and his Scots down to Worcester.^{2.} Some of the Presbyterians early left the Army, others were converted to Independency. At length, when the breach between Army and Parliament occurred in June, 1647, it was revealed that three-fourths of the officers^{3.} of the Army stood with Cromwell and Fairfax. The remainder -- one hundred and sixty-seven officers -- left the Army to support Parliament and the Presbyterian party.^{3.} The soldiers who followed them numbered but a few hundred;

1. Firth, Cromwell's Army, p. 317, quoting from Camden Miscellany, Vol. 5, p. viii.

2. Whitley, History of British Baptists, p. 74.

3. Firth, supra.

and Independent officers moved up into the positions vacated by Presbyterian officers.

As has been noted, the Baptists found the Army an excellent field for propagating their doctrines. Baptist officers preached regularly in many garrison towns. Chillenden, Freeman, Knollys, and Hobson were most successful soldier-evangelists,-- debating and publishing as well as preaching. Wherever the Army went Baptist churches seemed to spring up in its train. Colonels Rede and Deane were called to South Wales to quell a rebellion in Pembroke, and Baptist churches soon appeared along their line of march. Within a month after a similar uprising in Lancashire had been suppressed by Robert Lilburn, John Wigan started a Baptist church in Manchester. After the victory at Warrington by Rede, a church soon appeared; and another was organized following the fall of Pontefract at that place.^{1.} An unknown officer of Cromwell's Army formed a church at Broughton.^{2.}

It was not at all uncommon for Baptist churches to be organized within the Army itself. Such a church was organized at Leith in Scotland in 1650, and it soon had some civilian members. Baptists in the Army in Scotland were very numerous and important. "Every commander in Scotland, and the Commander-in-Chief, was a Baptist at one time..."^{3.} Yet, for these Baptists there was a sense of isolation from the great body of their brethren in England; so, to show their unity with London Baptists and to show forth their beliefs, they issued in Leith, in March, 1653, a new edition of the Confession of 1644. It was a

1. Whitley, History of British Baptists, p. 78.

2. Douglas, History of Baptist Churches in the North of England, p.13.

3. Whitley, supra, p. 74.

reprint of the 1651-1652 Editions, and it was called by them "The Fourth Impression, corrected." The Edition was introduced by a short letter "To the impartial Reader," in which the errors and prejudices of the time were named as the provocation for publishing. "Quaker teachings" may have been chiefly in mind, as McGlothlin^{1.} says, but some of the "prejudices of the time" against Baptists were probably more generally entertained in Scotland. Thomas Spencer, Abra. Holmes, Thomas Powell, and John Brady signed the Edition "in the name and by the appointment of the Church of Christ, usually meeting at Leith and Edinburgh."

In 1653 a "Fifth Impression Corrected" was issued by Henry Hills, London. It, too, was a reproduction of the 1651-1652 Editions. Possibly there were yet other editions. Certainly there were later reprints: one in 1802, and another by the Baptist Tract Society, in 1847.^{2.}

8.

Perhaps no Confession of Faith has had so formative an influence on Baptist life as the London Confession of 1644. Like other Baptist Confessions it is of great historical value; and because it was the first popularly known Baptist Confession it is of the greatest value. Harold Brown says,

"This significant document of 1644 embodies practically every doctrine that present-day Baptists hold dear, and is, therefore, vastly important in Baptist history since from the time of its promulgation the basic beliefs of the Baptists have been the same."^{3.}

1. Baptist Confessions of Faith, p. 200.

2. Ibid.

3. "The History of the Baptists in England to 1644," in The Chronicle, January, 1945, p. 14.

Nor is its historical importance its only claim to significance. It was, in its own right, a strong and practical statement of Christian doctrine. Its first edition anticipated the monumental Westminster Confession. As to theological outlook, its Calvinism was never harsh, and succeeding editions, after 1646, tended to emphasize a further moderating of it in Particular Baptist life. This was not the direction in which most of the other groups of the period were moving.

The immediate value of the Confession to Baptist life can hardly be overstated. Though issued in the name of London Baptists, it served Particular Baptists all over the country at a time when the Particular Baptist stream was becoming the major stream of Baptist life. It certainly was one of the most effective bits of Baptist propaganda, both for winning a toleration for Baptists in the eyes of other British religious groups, and for winning converts to the Baptist position. For example, it helped Richard Baxter form his final and favorable opinion of the Baptists:

'And for the Anabaptists (though I have written and said so much against them) as I found that most of them were persons of zeal in religion, so many of them were sober, godly people, and differed from others but in the point of infant baptism, or, at most, in the points of predestination and free will and perseverance.' 1.

Probably no document ever made more friends for the Baptists; and none has ever so much disappointed their opponents. Having served its purpose, it soon fell into disuse; so the Assembly of 1688 reported that copies of it were exceedingly rare. However, in 1688 it had already, and for all time, entered the life-stream of the Baptists. Vedder is right in calling the Confession "one of the chief

1. Quoted in Price, History of Protestant Nonconformity, pp. 320-322. Vol. 1.

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landmarks of Baptist history."

9.

Original copies of the 1644 Confession may be found at the following places: Baptist College, Bristol, Gould Collection, Oxford, British Museum, Bodleian Library, Oxford, Baptist College, Manchester, and Trinity College, Dublin. Copies of the 1646 Edition may be found in the Gould Collection, the British Museum, the Bodleian, and Trinity College; while one copy of the 1651 Edition is in the Gould Collection, and one copy of the 1652 Edition is in the Midland Baptist College, Nottingham.² McGlothlin included the 1644 Edition in his codex, Baptist Confessions of Faith, and Underhill included the 1646 Edition in his work, Confessions of Faith ... of the Baptist Churches of England.

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1. A Short History of the Baptists, p. 142.
 2. Whitley, A Baptist Bibliography, p. 17.

CHAPTER III

ASSOCIATIONAL CONFESSIONS, 1651-1656

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CHAPTER III

ASSOCIATIONAL CONFESSIONS, 1651-1656

I. Development of the Association Idea among Baptists

1.

A feature of Anabaptist (especially Mennonite) life was the close connectional relationship of the churches. This was not due to any legal bond, for the independence of each congregation was strictly maintained. Rather, the tie of brotherhood and mutual love held the churches together and made possible the yearly meeting. At this meeting such matters were decided upon as the support of the poor, the supplying of ministers to congregations which needed them, and the maintenance of public worship. Issues provoking dissension in the local congregations might be appealed to the meeting. Constraint was never used by the yearly meeting, but the group sought to advise and recommend the duties of the churches in particular matters.^{1.}

It is evident that the same general scheme of church life was maintained among the early General Baptist churches. Only our ignorance of their early life prevents our seeing many details of their cooperative activity. Whenever there were common problems or tasks, they seem to have consulted with one another. They held that a church is not only a local group of believers having discipline and self-chosen leadership, but also a congeries of groups of believers standing in voluntary relationship to one another, especially for the purpose of effectively proclaiming the Gospel to the world. To perform better the missionary function, some of the Elders were sent out into the world for the special purpose of evangelizing, thus continuing in a sense the apostolic office. These "Messengers" might represent

1. Barclay, The Inner Life of the Religious Societies of the Commonwealth, pp. 88-89.

one church or, later, groups of churches. Formal organization of the work on a national or even a sectional scale was not possible until about the middle of the seventeenth century, but the desire of the churches to live and work together was evident from the first. The same tendency was present among the Particular Baptists, in spite of their Independent connections and their more rigid regard for local autonomy.

The Baptists were not independents in the sense that the idea of a visible Church had to be discarded in order that the rights of separate congregations might be affirmed. Here they differed from the Independents, or Congregationalists, of their time. Even the right of religious freedom, for which Baptists contended so earnestly, was not an end in itself, but it was considered 'a condition necessary for the discharge of their duty to create a visible Church of perfect purity.'¹ The Independents did not choose to seek intercourse with fellow churches; they did not refuse it, but they simply took no early steps away from their comparative isolation. In short, the earliest churches of Separatism rarely thought of any problems as to their relationship to one another, whereas the relations of Baptist churches were never regarded by themselves as optional. While some Baptist churches may have lived in comparative isolation in days of persecution, even then they held, as Payne reminds us, that "the local congregation is not truly a church if it lives an entirely separate life."² The Midland Churches in 1655 announced no new principle for Baptists

1. Micklewright, F.H.A., "Some Further Notes on Mill Yard Meeting House," in Notes and Queries for Readers and Writers, Vol. 191, No. 7, Oct. 5, 1946, p. 138, quoting Creighton, Historical Lectures and Addresses, p. 54 and p. 54.

2. The Fellowship of Believers, p. 27.

when they said,"... it is our duty to hold communion with each other^{1.}
... and so to be helpful each to the other"

By the time the Civil War Period was reached both groups of Baptists were evangelizing by the use of travelling evangelists or Messengers. At first a Messenger was given a separate commission for each journey, but soon Messengers were being set aside with evangelism as their main task and churches were undertaking the support of them and their families. With the work of evangelizing there was also the work of organizing the communities of converts and counselling them in the early stages of their separate existence. General Baptists pioneered in this work, though most details of their labors are regrettably unavailable; but, it remained for the Particular Baptists formally to announce the idea which was to germinate into the district association. Article 47 of the London Confession first asserts the autonomy of the particular congregation, but then it goes on to declare, with ample Scripture proof, that the churches "(by all means convenient) are to have the counsel and help one of another, if necessity require it, as members of one body, in the common faith, under Christ their head."^{2.} Christian says, "The day this was declared was the birthday of the modern association."^{3.} The principle of voluntarism under the authority of Christ was, at any rate, set forth as the basis for church order. But the churches did not move immediately to formal association; the troubled times through which their country was passing gave small encouragement to such organization. At least the seven churches of London had demonstrated, through their Confes-

1. Stokes, History of the Midland Association, pp. 22-23.

2. Underhill, Confessions of Faith, p. 44.

3. A History of the Baptists, pp. 313-314.

sion, their sense of fellowship and their desire to work together.

2.

Political events did soon give impetus to the association movement. The London Churches, about the time they were first revising their Confession, were witnessing the work of the Westminster Assembly in working out the new system of the National Church. At their very doors the Presbyterian plan was thoroughly worked out for London by June, 1646, and for Lancashire, by September. The organization of synods in other parts of the country proceeded with much difficulty,^{1.} but Parliament usually forced the issue. A national uniformity of ecclesiastical organization was thus sought. But long before this a type of political departmental cooperation had taken shape, and on a voluntary basis. As a measure of mutual defence against royalist plundering, there arose in the winter of 1642-43 inter-county organizations called "Associations." The chief of these was the "Eastern Association," which included the counties of Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex, Cambridge, Herts., Hunts., and Lincoln. At the request of the House of Commons these counties raised an army of over two thousand troops. The Earl of Manchester assumed command of this Associated Counties Army, and the successes of his command were so spectacular that Parliament decided to remodel the whole military system after this organization. Later this "New Model Army" organized a council for political action, each regiment being represented. From 1647, then, there was a strong inter-regimental voluntary organization, and Baptists were^{2.} very active in it.

1. Vid. "Association Life till 1815," in Transactions Baptist Hist. Society, Vol.5 (1916-17), p. 19.

2. Whitley, History of British Baptists, p. 91.

The New Model Army hastened to Ireland and subdued that land between 1649 and 1652. In the strong garrisons which were left behind following the fighting there were Baptists, and, as in England, Baptist churches sprang up around the garrisons. William Allen, John Vernon, Christopher Blackwood, and Thomas Patient were among the chief Baptist evangelists, the last two being famous preachers. Under Cromwell and Ireton Baptists were put into places of trust in Ireland; under Fleetwood (himself a Baptist) the trend was continued, so that when Henry Cromwell came over to succeed Fleetwood he found ten colonels, ten majors, nineteen captains, twelve governors of towns, and twenty-three on the civil list, who were Baptists.¹ These military Baptists carried over into their church life the idea of the close inter-regimental organization, so a close inter-congregational voluntary organization was in existence by 1653. In June of that year, "The Churches of Christ in Ireland, united together ..." sent, from Waterford, a letter to the London Particular churches urging, as they said they had urged more than once before, that all the Baptist churches of England, Scotland, and Wales correspond with them, and that regular quarterly communications be sent among all the churches.² These suggestions now proved remarkably fruitful.

Meanwhile, the Rump Parliament in February and March, 1650, erected two commissions to propagate the Gospel in two districts which had always been considered as units, Wales and the Northern Counties of

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1. Vid. "Baptist Ministers in Ireland, 1651-59," in The Baptist Quarterly, Vol. 6 (1932-33), p. 233.
 2. Vid. "Association Life till 1815," in Transactions Baptist Hist. Society, Vol. 5 (1916-17), pp. 19-23.

England. Some of the commissioners were Baptists; some of the preachers sent were Baptists; and Baptist churches quickly arose in the two districts. Because the preachers were under the control of the commissions, it was made more likely that their churches would associate. We hear first of a conference of three Welsh churches on November 6-7, 1650, at Ilston. Another was held on March 19, 1651, at which time^{1.} another was appointed for Galligaer. The association movement was definitely in the air, for within a short period we hear of efforts at concerted action in London, Berkshire, Somerset, Gloucestershire, and Wales.

3.

Beside the influence of political events, there were two factors which contributed to the organization of associations at that time. One was the desire for more effective missionary effort. It was good for a London church to send Thomas Tillam to Hexham to plant a church, and for Henry Jessey to represent his church on an evangelistic tour of Wales, but how much better would it not be if all the churches of the Midlands, for example, should at once send ten men to preach in dozens of places within a short period! The times were challenging:^{2.} "Baptists were at the zenith of political and military power" in 1653; and coordination of effort was imperative. The other factor which hastened the organization of associations was the tremendous new pressure of the Quakers. A single visit from a band of Quaker preachers more than once shook a church to its foundations; but in association with other churches each church might find a new source of strength

1. Wood, History of the General Baptists of the New Connexion, p.112.

2. Whitley, Minutes of the General Assembly, p.1, Vol.1.

and deliverance from its feeling of isolation. No lone church, it was soon learned, could face the unremitting attacks of the Quakers; yet it seemed that sooner or later all churches would come face to face with these worthy adversaries. A united front was sorely needed.

4.

The Irish Churches stimulated the movement. Upon receiving the letter from them, the London Church which met in Glaziers' Hall on Broad Street quickly took up the matter. Peter Scutt of that Church sent out, in the name of "the several churches of Christ in London," a circular letter dealing with "nearer communion." The Irish letter was enclosed and its recommendations were endorsed. The letter was well received. On July 26, 1653, the Church at Hexham sent a letter (perhaps the circular letter) to John Tombes, who had been building churches in the West, and this brought forth a joint reply from eight churches in Gloucester, Hereford, Worcester, and Monmouth, approving the idea of the Irish.^{1.}

The feeling as to cooperative union showed itself to be very general throughout the country, and it evidently was not due to military and political precedents, but primarily to a general Baptist tendency. Activity at this time in the direction of association of the churches was also reflective of the new sense of liberty which was challenging the nation. Thomas Collier in 1651 sent out A Second General Epistle to all the Saints of the Western part of England who belonged to his circle, showing that some kind of brotherhood already

1. "Dissent in Worcestershire during the Seventeenth Century," in Transactions Baptist Hist. Society, Vol.7 (1920-21), pp.5-6.

existed among them. At a meeting of November 6-7, 1653, at Wells, it was indicated that there had been earlier meetings of this group.^{1.} The Berkshire Association was formally organized on October 8, 1652, at Wormsley -- the earliest formal organization of a Particular Baptist Association in England of which there is definite record^{2.} -- and its constitution and by-laws were adopted on March 17, 1653. Whitley suggests that the new fashion of constitutions can probably be traced to the recent activity of Baptists in putting out paper constitutions for the State.^{3.} In 1653 the Western Association (of churches largely due to the labors of Thomas Collier) was organized, and in 1654 it issued an official Circular Letter.^{4.} In 1653 or 1654, also, when Cromwell wanted to know the feeling of the "Gathered Churches" concerning his policy, he obtained a reply not only from the Tombes group in the West, but also from a Gloucester group of Baptist churches at Stow, Barton, Oddington, and Winchcombe.^{5.}

5.

Thus within ten years following the associating of the London Churches to prepare a Confession, permanent Associations had become typical Baptist institutions. They were the result of deliberate effort at building a system of organization, and stress must be put on the fact that they were characteristically Baptist. Were there similar movements toward association in other dissenting bodies? Richard Baxter did promote, in 1653 as the Presbyterian system in England was

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1. "Association Life till 1815," in Transactions Baptist Hist. Society, Vol. 5 (1916-17), pp. 19-23.
 2. If the London Churches had a permanent organization, with regular meetings, we have no record of it; but that special meetings could be called when necessary is seen in their important meeting of March 18, 1647. Vid. *supra*, pp. 37-38, Chap. II.
 3. History of British Baptists, p. 91.
 4. "Association Life till 1815," in *supra*, pp. 19-23.
 5. "Dissent in Worcestershire during the Seventeenth Century," in Transactions Baptist Hist. Society, Vol. 7 (1920-21), pp. 5-6.

crumbling, a monthly meeting of Ministers, Deacons, and Elders of his own congregation; and a similar plan was used among churches in Cheshire and Cumberland at the same time, but this plan, "so far as it linked together separate congregations, was rigidly clerical, and it was soon regulated by the Provincial Synod of London."¹ The Independents took one step toward associating in 1658 (at the Savoy), and then turned back. Membership in Baptist associations was always voluntary: a church could refuse even to subscribe to a particular collection, could contract out of its share in associational obligations, and could object to the supervision or work of a Messenger. The real character of Baptist associations is seen in the methods of mutual helpfulness agreed upon by the churches at the formation of the Midland Association:

1st. In giving advice, after serious consultation and deliberation in matters and controversies remaining doubtful to any particular church, according to the plain example of the churches of Jerusalem and Antioch.

2nd. In sending their gifted brethren to use their gifts for the edification of the churches that need the same, as they shall see it to be seasonable, as the church at Jerusalem sent Barnabas to Antioch.

3rd. In giving and receiving also, in case of the poverty and want of any particular church; as plainly doth appear in the approved and due acting of the churches of the Gentiles towards the church at Jerusalem.

4th. In a joint carrying on of any part of the work of the Lord, as commanded to the churches, as they shall have opportunity to join therein to the glory of God.

5th. In watching over each other, and considering each other for good, in respect of purity of doctrine, exercise of love and good conversation, being all members of the same body of Christ, who therefore ought to have care one for another, especially considering how the glory of God is concerned in their standing and holy conversation."²

1. "Association Life till 1815," in Transactions Baptist Hist. Society, Vol. 5 (1916-17), pp. 19-23.

2. Stokes, History of the Midland Association, pp. 26-28.

Moreover, Baptist associational meetings always saw the ministers outnumbered by other members.^{1.} It appears that London Particular churches had been in touch with one another since 1642, and it is to be remembered that one of them, the "Glass-house" Church, had won the two Welshmen, who returned home and, in November, 1650, called the meeting of three churches at which concerted action was planned and a joint fund raised.^{2.} In view of the meetings and cooperative steps of the churches of London and of Wales before 1651, it must be concluded that "Baptist Associations owe little to the others [Puritan and Presbyterian Associations], while they absolutely gave the model which the others altered."^{3.}

The General Baptists, as has been noted, had from the beginning a closer organization than the Particular Baptists. Their sense of denominational unity was fostered by visits of Messengers and by concerted missionary effort. Each church was autonomous, but moral suasion was used to secure the cooperation of all. There is every reason to doubt Christian's idea that many of the General Baptists during the period of the civil wars were Royalists (unlike their Particular brethren), and that this influenced their system of organization; but, certainly there was more of a tendency among them to adopt presbyterial organization. Anyway, in the early days of the Commonwealth they too began to associate by districts. The appearance of their Midland Association in 1651 has been noted, and other associational meetings are heard of at Cambridge in 1654 and at Stamford in 1656.^{5.} Perhaps

1. "Association Life till 1815," vid. supra., pp. 19-23.

2. Whitley, History of British Baptists, p. 91.

3. "Association Life till 1815," vid. supra., pp. 19-23.

4. A History of the Baptists, pp. 313-314.

5. Owen, Records of an Old Association, pp. 72-73.

General Baptists on associating did not usually feel the need for such formal acts of organization as the preparation of constitutions, by-laws, and confessions, since they were more used to general cooperation among the churches, but they fashioned closer bonds of fellowship and more effective units for particular tasks by organizing associations. In this period they were to carry organization on to a far greater length than the Particular Baptists were yet willing to go, arranging inter-associational communication, forming a General Assembly of the churches in the nation in 1654, and publishing in 1660 a unifying document, a general Confession of Faith.

All of the Baptist Confessions of Faith which appeared during the years of the Commonwealth were closely connected with the association movement. Indeed, each Confession was a direct product of the movement, and several Confessions served it well as unifying instruments. They can best be studied in chronological order.

II. "The Faith and Practice of Thirty Congregations," 16511.

In the Commonwealth Period the Midlands was a principal area of Baptist strength in the country. Lincolnshire and Worcestershire have, indeed, been named as "the two chief Baptist centers of the country."^{1.} As far as General Baptists are concerned, Lincolnshire seems to have been their leading county, with Leicestershire close behind. It is not surprising, therefore, that the first General Baptist Association should gather about Leicester because of its central location in the Midlands. Within twelve miles of Leicester itself there were churches at Wymeswold, Walton-on-the-Wolds, Mt. Sorrel, Whitwick, Earl Shilton, and Theddingworth; and the one at Bitteswell was not far distant.^{2.}

An associational meeting was held in 1651, probably at Leicester, but it is not certain that this was the first such meeting of the Midland churches. Evidently cooperative work of the churches was already well organized in 1651. Messengers for both special and constant work were appointed, and there was complete agreement on the responsibility of the churches in sharing the burden of relieving the needs of the poor. Thirty churches were represented at the meeting, each by two delegates or messengers,^{3.} and they represented an area one hundred miles long and twenty-four miles wide, from North Willingham in Lincolnshire to Horley in Oxfordshire, and from Normanton in Leicestershire to Tixover in Rutland, respectively.^{4.} Twelve of the churches represented were in Lincolnshire, nine in Leicestershire, three in Rutland,

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1. "Some notable Names in Midland Baptist History" (unsigned), in The Baptist Quarterly, Vol.3 (1926-27), pp. 280-281.
 2. "Early Leicester Baptists," in ibid., Vol.1 (1922-23), p. 74.
 3. Not necessarily occupants of the office of "Messenger."
 4. Whitley, History of British Baptists, p. 89.

two in Warwickshire, and one each in Northamptonshire, Bedfordshire, Oxfordshire, and Huntingdonshire. The name "Leicestershire Association" came to be given to this group, and its meetings continued at least until 1776,^{1.} though within about forty years of its organization the unit became two associations, with centers at Leicester and Lincoln.^{2.} The fact that this strong Association arose in the very homeland of George Fox six years after the beginning of the Quaker movement is sufficient refutation, in itself, of any idea that the Midland General Baptists went over enmasse to the Quakers. Rather, it is to be supposed that the necessity of presenting a united front against the Quakers and other critics was the moving cause in the organization of the Association. How often this Association met during the Commonwealth Period we do not know, but Whitley^{3.} notes a meeting held five years after the 1651 gathering, and another in Cambridge-shire.

2.

Probably the most important thing done in the meeting of 1651 was the adoption of a Confession which was called "The Faith and Practice of Thirty Congregations, Gathered According to the Primitive Pattern." This Confession, signed by sixty-one representatives of the churches, was addressed to "all the Saints and Churches of England, Wales, Army, or elsewhere." While it represented only the thirty churches, regret~~was~~ expressed in the introductory statement that the "Christian Advice and Assistance" of all those to whom it was addressed

1. "Three Hundred Years of Baptist Life in Coventry," in The Baptist Quarterly, Vol. 3 (1926-27), p. 138.

2. Whitley, "The Midland Churches of 1651," in The Baptist Quarterly, Vol. 2 (1924-25), p. 319 and p. 324.

3. Ibid, p. 319.

could not be had. "Distance of place, and also being unacquainted" were the two factors which had made this collaboration impossible. The purposes of publishing at this time a statement of belief and practice were set forth as:

- "1. To inform those who have a desire to know what Religious Duties they hold forth.
2. To undeceive those that are misinformed thereof.
3. To the end that the said Congregations may in love, and the spirit of Meekness, be informed by any that conceive they walk amiss." 1.

This statement infers that local opponents were active, but who they were is not specified. One would expect the usual Church of England and Calvinistic Separatist critics to be involved, and in addition the Quakers and Seekers. There is no direct evidence of the labors among these particular churches of any of the early Quaker leaders, but George Fox had gathered his first followers among Nottinghamshire General Baptists in 1647, and soon after he was preaching with great success in a General Baptist church at Broughton, on the borders of^{2.} Leicestershire and Nottinghamshire. From that time the preaching of Fox attracted much attention, and Quakers began to multiply in the North Midlands. About the end of 1648, or the beginning of 1649, Fox^{3.} felt the definite call to go into the "world" to preach his message, and, while he first turned to the North of England, the General Baptist churches probably knew that he would not long neglect his home district. In October, 1651, he was freed from Derby Prison and was^{4.} again at home. It would at least seem that these Midland Baptists had much more cause in 1651 to fear the Quakers than did the London

1. McGlothlin, Baptist Confessions of Faith, p. 95.
 2. Emmott, A Short History of Quakerism, p. 86.
 3. Ibid., p. 88.
 4. Ibid., p. 96.

Particular Baptist churches, which in that year published a new edition of their Confession of Faith for the definite purpose of counter-acting the Quaker movement. Furthermore, because of its wide circulation, the new edition and its accompanying Heart-Bleedings for Professors Abominations must have been known to the General Baptists.

The Confession of 1651 was signed by sixty-one men about whom very little is known, and who its author (or authors) was there seems no way of proving. Few of the signatories are heard of again in the story of Baptist life; but, because their Confession is the first English General Baptist statement representing the views of more than one church, it should be studied carefully. McGlothlin^{1.} suggests that it be compared with the Westminster Confession and the 1655 Confession of Midland Particular Baptists -- and those are good suggestions -- but it seems much more profitable to set it between the 1611 Confession of the Helwys Church and the Standard General Baptist Confession of 1660 to see the progress of General Baptist thought.

3.

This Confession is well named "The Faith and Practice" of thirty congregations, the first forty-five Articles concerning almost entirely the doctrines of the group and the remaining thirty demonstrating the practices of the churches. The development of the doctrinal section is quite unlike that of both the 1611 Confession and the London Confession of 1644. While the recurring editions of the London Confession, and especially the 1651 Edition, may have been a contributing cause to the decision of the General Baptist group to publish

1. Baptist Confessions of Faith, p. 92.

then, there is little indication that the authors were strongly influenced by the London document. There is evidence, however, of the influence of John Smyth's hundred-article Confession published in Amsterdam. Still, the originality of both form and statement of the 1651 Confession is remarkable. If the authors were not brilliant men, they were at least men of conviction and practical outlook. The contents of the Confession may be studied under several heads:

A. Theological Outlook

The general theological position is much the same as that of the 1611 Confession, but there are some notable variations between the two Confessions. Largely because of the strange arrangement of subjects, one's first impression on reading the Confession of 1651 is that the Midland group had discarded some of Helwys' Calvinistic framework and had thought out a more consistently Arminian system, but further study reveals that these General Baptists yet continued to hold firmly to some emphases which have always belonged to Calvinism. The terms Predestination and Election are not used, but the doctrines they represent are considered in several Articles on Grace.¹ Grace is defined as "those gifts which God of his free grace gives unto men to the enabling or ~~impowering~~ (sic) them to obey or believe in his name."² While the distinctive General Baptist doctrine, that Christ "suffered death for all mankind, or every man," is set forth, it is not made clear whether all men have power to believe savingly. Yet, every man has "some measure of light." Article 25 says, "That there is not ...

1. Articles 29-32.

2. Article 31. All quotations from this Confession are from McGlothlin, Baptist Confessions of Faith, pp. 95-109.

any man endued with any abilities and power to do the revealed will of God, but it was given him from above," and Article 29 limits the gifts of grace,^{1.} saying that they are divided "severally as it pleaseth him [God]." This sounds Calvinistic, and there is a similar emphasis in Articles 37-38:

"... God loves man first, and declareth, or maketh known his love to men, before any man can act from a principle of love in obedience to him," and "... believing or obeying doth not procure salvation as eternal life, neither are they any cause at all to move God to bestow it."

On the other hand, and unlike the Helwys Confession, the results of the Fall seem to be limited to physical death and its attendant "sorrows" for Adam.^{2.} The authors evidently followed the statement in John Smyth's Confession of one hundred "Propositions and Conclusions," "That all actual sinners bear the image of the first Adam, in his innocency, fall, and restitution in the offer of grace, and so pass under these three conditions, or threefold estate."^{3.} There is no mention of original sin or of an inherited disposition toward sin. The Confession breathes the spirit of human freedom, but the authors indicate the usual General Baptist sensitiveness to the accusation of holding the doctrine of free-will. This doctrine is repudiated in Article 25. Man is free to respond to the gracious call of God to repentance and faith, to reject that call and so be "liable to destruction," but not to advance his hope of salvation through anything willed or done of himself. There is no doctrine of Perseverance, but instead there is a statement that "All those that continue steadfastly unto the end of

1. Article 31 defines the power to believe as a gift of grace.

2. Article 15.

3. Article 21, Barclay, op. cit., Chapter VI Appendix, p. viii.

their lives ... shall have a Crown of eternal glory in the life to come." ^{1.}

B. Individual Competency

The most surprising development in the Confession comes in Articles 4 through 16. There is to be found a detailed statement of the doctrine which has more recently been given the name "the competency of the soul." This doctrine was set forth with striking freshness by the American educator, E. Y. Mullins, in his work The Axioms of Religion, as the fundamental Baptist doctrine; and here it is being advanced in perhaps its most elaborate early statement by Baptists. The statement is deficient in polish, but its meaning is unmistakable. Man has capacity for God; God has revealed and is revealing Himself through the created order and through Christ to men; men are expected to open their lives to the revelation of God, and when they have done that they have in themselves all that is needed for living the abundant life. The case of Adam is cited in five articles: Adam with the plain facts of revelation before him chose wrong and suffered the consequences of his choice. The position of modern man is not different from that of Adam. The subject of man's competency is then balanced by an equal number of articles on the meaning of stewardship or discipleship. That stewardship concerns first the gifts of God, but it finds its incentive in love for God (founded on God's love for the individual), its outworking in obedience to God, and its end in advancing the glory of God. Obedience brings its own rewards, not the least of which are larger revelations of and from God. ^{2.}

1. Article 43.

2. Article 41.

C. The Church

The Baptist teaching concerning the Church is well developed, though the concern of the authors was with church practice rather than with church theory. There is no explicit definition of the Church but, instead, in three consecutive articles^{1.} the membership, foundation, and chief ends of a "visible" church are indicated. The membership is of "those which received the word of God preached by the Ministrie of the Gospel, and were baptized according to the Counsel of God...." The "only foundation" of the "Church of God" "is the Doctrines of the Apostles or Prophets, as they spring from Jesus Christ the chiefe corner stone...."

"... the chief or only ends of a people baptised according to the counsel of God, when they meet together as the congregation or fellowship of Christ, are, or ought to be, for to walk suitably; or to give up themselves unto a holy conformity to all the Lawes or Ordinances of Jesus Christ, answerable to the gifts and graces received, improving them for the glory of God, and the edification of each other in love."

The ministry of a church is an orderly one: the church makes choice on the basis of New Testament standards for those offices, of certain members who are to "minister unto the saints in things spiritual and temporal."^{2.} These officers are then ordained with fasting, prayer, and the laying on of hands.^{3.} Ministers are to be maintained on a purely voluntary basis by the particular churches which they serve.^{4.} This maintenance should not extend, however, beyond "necessary food and rayment"; and to help secure things needful ministers are also to labor with their hands.^{5.} Faithful ministers are to be esteemed, but not ex-

1. Articles 50-52.
2. Article 66.
3. Article 73.

4. Article 60.
5. Article 61.

alted, lest the church "give that honour to man, which properly and alone belongeth to God."^{1.} The name Deacon is not used, but the office of a Deacon is referred to in a statement, "That the Church hath directions of God to set apart some men that are suteably (sic) qualified, to oversee, or order the affairs concerning the poor... and to take off that work from lying too heavy upon the care of those which labour in the word and doctrine."^{2.} Special contributions are prescribed, "for the relief of those that cannot help themselves with food and rayment," in Article 57.

Disciplinary rules have been worked out in detail in the Confession, though the same rules may have been in use in General Baptist churches for many years. If a member fall into sin and he refuse to repent and reform, he is not to be permitted "to break bread with obedient walkers, to shew forth the death of Christ, seeing he doth deny him in life and conversation."^{3.} Yet Christians ought to feel tender toward such and to labor to lead them back into fellowship. Evidently denying offending members the right of participation in the Supper was equivalent to excommunication, though excommunication is specifically recommended only for those who, persistently refusing the exhortations of their brethren concerning the matter, suffer need through their own neglect and indolence.^{4.} Clearly, poverty was a harsh fact well known to the churches. Two other disciplinary rules are listed. First, offending members ought without delay to make known the supposed offences and deal with the matters "that their hearts may not be hardened by a

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- 1. Article 63.
 - 2. Article 64.
 - 3. Article 55.
 - 4. Article 68.

1. custome in sin" Second, in order to judge between cases of disagreement in the church, "some men among the brotherhood who are able to judge" should be "approved or appointed to put an end thereto without partiality, that there be no unnecessary strivings in the Law to vex one another."^{2.}

The cooperative work of the churches is outlined in several particulars. In the case that the physical necessities of members cannot be met "in that society whereunto they most commonly resort," those officers who look after such affairs are to inform the other churches, "who have ingaged themselves by declaring their willingness towards the relief of such a distressed people."^{3.} Again, if a local church be unable to settle a case of disagreement among its members, some other church with which they are in fellowship might be appealed to for assistance.^{4.} Also, a record of excommunications is to be kept and made known among the churches, "for prevention of evils" among them by the excommunicates.^{5.} The name of Messenger or Apostle does not appear, but the office is described in the words:

"That it is the good pleasure of God ... that some of the gifted men should be appointed or set apart to attend upon the preaching of the word, for the further edifying of the Churches, that they may be enabled to stand against all oppositions according as necessity requires" 6.

Thus the office announced in Article 22 of the 1611 Confession was kept, though a special reason for its importance at that time was the necessity of uniting the churches against the threat of the Quakers.

Finally, it is interesting to learn that the original General Baptist practice of encouraging the exercise of "gifts" among members

1. Article 69.
2. Article 67.
3. Article 65.

4. Article 70.
5. Article 72.
6. Article 58.

was still strongly held to in 1651. Thus lay-preaching and teaching were encouraged, and the hearers were instructed. Article 71 lays down the only rule in the matter: the exercise and improvement of gifts must be done in an orderly manner.

D. The Ordinances

The Ordinances are considered in four articles, three of which concern Baptism. McGlothlin says the Confession of 1660 is "the first of the English General Baptist Confessions to prescribe dipping or immersion as the essential form of baptism"¹; but surely Article 48 of the 1651 Confession precedes it as it says, "That the way and manner of baptising, both before the death of Christ, and since his resurrection and ascension, was to go into the water, and to be baptised."² The Midland General Baptists clearly had studied the question thoroughly by 1651, as their thinking about the form of baptism used "before the death of Christ, and since ..." shows. The word baptize now held for them one meaning and suggested only one mode. The authors say that only people who know the meaning of baptism, and who voluntarily submit themselves unto it, should be baptized.³ For a person to refuse baptism, "or any other Action of obedience," once it is made known, is to "reject the counsel of God against themselves."⁴ Baptism is the door into "the visible Church of God," a last step into the fellowship of saints.⁵ The Supper is defined simply as "a memorial of his suffering" left by Christ, "to continue in the Church until he come again."⁶

E. Quaker Kinship and Pressure

One looks in this Confession for signs of Quaker kinship with and

1. Baptist Confessions of Faith, p. 110.
 2. Article 48.
 3. Article 47.

4. Article 49.
 5. Article 50.
 6. Article 53.

pressure on the General Baptists, and they are easily found. Article 28 says that Christ gives every man in the world "some measure of light." This sounds like the much-discussed "openings" and "experiences" of the Quakers, and it might have been considered identical^{1.} with them by many lay-theologians of that day. Article 45 could well be aimed at the Quakers:

"That whosoever shall preach, teach, or practice any doctrine in the worship of God ... which is not to be heard or read of in the record of God, which was given by inspiration of the holy Ghost; such teachers are lyable to the curse of God, howsoever countenanced by men."

Also, the emphasis which is placed on the voluntary basis of ministerial support and on the danger of over-exalting ministers may be accounted for by the cavils of the Quakers. Quakers must have been foremost among those referred to in Article 75, who "by their wilful-contrivances" and "mis-informations" are "setting our good names on fire...." In view of this pressure from without, the duty of members to vindicate themselves from "all those scandalous aspersions that dailie fall about our ears." was declared.

F. Magistracy

There is a "Postscript" Article on Magistracy, in which the subscribers pledged themselves to support the magistrate even with their estates and lives. This statement was probably suggested by the Particular Baptist Confession's statement on the subject, but it is remarkable that it was not included in the body of "The Faith and Practice of Thirty Congregations." Perhaps there were some General Baptists who would say an article on magistracy is out of place in a

1. Richards, Religious Developments in Wales, pp. 256-257.

Confession of Faith.

4.

The Confession of 1651 shows essential agreement with the first General Baptist Confession (1611). The positions of the earlier Confession have been elaborated, but they are still expressed with simplicity and directness. Their native strength has been more clearly revealed as the beliefs of the one church have become the practice of the many. The authors in 1651 were not trained theologians, but they had long been diligent students of the New Testament, and they were determined that the pattern of the Church that they saw there should, under the immediate leadership of the Holy Spirit, be followed in their communities.

Adoption of the Confession must have drawn the churches closer together, giving them a greater sense of unity and strength. The Confession must have served—as the authors said they intended it to serve "our further Confirmation and Encouragement"—at least its announced purpose. Three years later some of these Midland Baptists were strongly opposing George Fox at Swannington, near Whitwick, and we hear of William Inge and Thomas Christian being sent in 1656 by a conference at Stamford to stir up the Earl Shilton and Mt. Sorrel Churches towards the support of two messengers who should work in the Midlands as evangelists.^{1.} It must also be noted that this Confession prepared the way and probably served as a model for the London Confession of 1654 and the important "Standard" Confession of the greater General Baptist fellowship in 1660.

1. Vid. "Early Leicester Baptists," in The Baptist Quarterly, Vol.1 (1922-23), p. 74.

5.

The appeal of the Confession to "all the Saints and Churches of God, who walk according to the commands of Jesus Christ, in England Wales, Army, or elsewhere," did not go unheeded. For example, it soon attracted the attention of some London Baptists. In the year of its publication, a Petition of "divers gathered churches" asked that an Ordinance of 1548, for punishing blasphemies and heresies, be declared null and void. The Petition was occasioned by the imprisonment of John Biddle, a Unitarian, on the grounds that his belief violated this Ordinance. It explained that, while Biddle differed from the petitioners in "many great matters of faith," his imprisonment seemed to the petitioners to deny the liberty which the Government had promised. The "gathered churches" here represented must have been largely, if not entirely, General Baptist churches, for, beside the fact that the plea for universal liberty of conscience sounds like many other General Baptist pleas, the authors appended a letter to the thirty Midland churches which begins: "Dearly beloved Brethren." In the letter disappointment is expressed at the failure of the Government, as seen in the occasioning of the above petition, to guarantee religious liberty, and warning is given of the "affliction and persecution hanging over yours, and our own heads." The authors ask pointedly, "And will not the severity of the said Ordinance fall first on you, who have begun ... to profess your faith...?"^{1.} Still, the Midland churches are commended upon putting out their Confession: "A bold confession of the truth is better Armour against persecution than an hypocriti-

1. The Petition of divers gathered churches ... about the city of London, for declaring the ordinance of the Lords & Commons, for publishing blasphemies and heresies, null and void, pp. 3-4.

call silence ..." and they are urged to "Harken diligently to the voice of Christ....," to "pray that the guilt of the former murders and oppressions for conscience, may not be brought upon this our wearie England," and to "prepare yourselves for the battle of persecution...."^{1.}

6.

Two original copies of the Confession of 1651 are known to be extant: one in the Angus Library, Regent's Park College, Oxford,^{2.} the other in the Gould Collection. McGlothlin offers a copy in his codex, Baptist Confessions of Faith, pp. 95-109, which follows a facsimile reprint of the original made by John Taylor of Northampton.

1. Op. cit., p. 6.

2. Whitley, A Baptist Bibliography, p. 44.

III. "The True Gospel-Faith"
A Confession of London General Baptists, 1654

1.

While the London General Baptists congratulated their Midland brethren upon issuing their 1651 Confession, they did not immediately follow their example. London churches were already cooperating, so there was no need for a Confession as a basis of fellowship; and the churches were content to publish their convictions on particular points as occasion demanded. By 1653, as has been noted, Baptists were at the zenith of their power both in the Army and in the Government; to them danger seemed further away than it had been for years. There was freedom to preach and to publish. The energies of the churches were devoted wholeheartedly to evangelizing and to organizing churches. In 1653 alone, fifty-three Baptist churches (General and Particular) are said to have been organized in the nation.^{1.} This was the greatest number for any year of the period,-- which illustrates the preoccupation of the older churches with missionary tasks. At least there was no special call for a Confession of Faith in the years 1651 to 1653. By 1654, however, there was call enough: the Quakers had invaded London in force.

Early in his ministry, George Fox saw that he could not by himself effect the religious revolution he desired. In 1649 he had an interview with the celebrated young preacher, Samuel Oates, then itinerating as a representative of the parent General Baptist Church in London, which was meeting in Bell Alley.^{2.} The idea of itinerating preachers seemed a good one to Fox, and soon he was sending out an

1. Vid. "Baptist Churches till 1660," in Transactions Baptist Hist. Society, Vol. 2 (1910-11), pp. 235-245.
2. Barclay, op. cit., p. 256.

organized band of such preachers. In 1653 they numbered at least thirty, and in 1654 their numbers grew to sixty or more.^{1.} In the summer of the latter year some of Fox's men moved to "conquer London."^{2.} This was part of a larger strategy of "occupying" the largest English cities. Six Quaker preachers started south at once: Howgill and Burrough went straight to London, arriving early in July; Hubberthorne stopped for a short time at Oxford before going on to London; and Audland and Ayrey went toward Bristol.^{3.} The outstanding leaders who reached London in 1654 were not the first Quakers in that city. Two women had preceded them and had been busy distributing printed epistles of Fox. Amos Stoddart, formerly a captain in the army, and Gerrard Roberts, a merchant,^{4.} were also at work; and meetings were being held in private homes. Once in London, the leaders made their way to religious groups which were likely to show them most sympathy, Baptist and Independent churches and Seeker meetings. Evidently they moved with caution and were well received. One leader, writing to Fox in 1645, described the methods used:

'Much wisdom is to be used amongst them until the truth be clearly understood; and then to speak to that in their consciences, to the raising up of the witness, to let them see themselves; and then to pass judgment upon them, and so to keep them under from disputing and questioning. This we found the most profitable ministry Very many societies we have visited, and are now able to stand: many honest hearts are among the waiters, and some that are joined to the Ranters are a pretty people.' 5.

The General Baptists of London do not seem at once to have suspected danger for themselves in the Quaker movement -- they had too

1. Barclay, op. cit., p. 265, and Emmott, op. cit., p. 137.

2. Emmott, op. cit., p. 137.

3. Braithwaite, The Beginnings of Quakerism, pp. 157-158.

4. Penney (editor), "The First Publishers of Truth," p. 165.

5. Quoted in Harvey, The Rise of the Quakers, pp. 83-84, from Letters, &c., of Early Friends, p. 13.

much in common with it. The London Particular Baptists had cried out a warning against it in sending forth new editions of their Confession in 1651 and 1652, but the General Baptists had kept quiet. But when Quakers began holding great rival public meetings of their own, to say nothing of private meetings in numerous houses,^{1.} the General Baptists knew they must act quickly against them. By August, 1654, at least three great meetings of the Quakers were taking place each week, and such crowds were attending that the meeting-places were always too small for them. Some of the Quaker preachers moved to other parts of the country, but Howgill and Burrough stayed in London.^{2.} A regular meeting-center was obtained at the "Bull and Mouth near Aldersgate," and the city flowed into it.^{3.} The religious societies of London on whose membership the Friends were making the greatest inroads cried out against them.^{4.} The element of surprise had operated in the favor of the Quakers, and many religious groups looked frantically about for some defense against the almost irresistible enthusiasm of the new movement.

2.

Some General Baptist leaders held a meeting to consider what their churches might do. They decided to publish a thorough criticism of the Quaker positions, as they saw them, and to issue a confession of their faith. Thus they would follow the example of their Particular brethren, and thus they would take the offensive against the Quakers. Publicly, they declared that they were seizing another opportu-

1. Harvey, op. cit., p. 88.

2. Ibid., p. 85.

3. Penney (editor), op. cit., p. 165.

4. Emmott, op. cit., p. 138.

1.

nity to propagate the truth to the world; among themselves, they probably admitted that a good offense was the only defense, for they were now definitely on the defensive.

John Griffith, pastor (and founder in 1640) of the Dunning's

2.

Alley Church, and apparently now the leader of this group, prepared an attack on the Quakers which he entitled, A Voice from the word of the Lord to those grand Impostors called Quakers. In it he levelled five accusations at his opponents:

1. "... thou art fleshly minded, for thou lookest upon the institutions of Christ with a fleshly carnal eye, witness Richard Hubberthorn in his Antipathy between flesh and Spirit, where he saith that the bread and wine, which Christ commanded ... is carnal."
2. You are "spiritually proud ... giving out yourselves to be great ones."
3. You "boast of your light within."
4. You "reject and despise" the Word.
5. "You have rejected the Law of the Lord." 3.

The pamphlet was not intended to be read by Quakers only, however, for a last section was "A word of caution" addressed to "All that are called to be Saints in this Nation," and "which may concern all people." Saints were strongly urged to "Labour to see an excellency" in three objects of loyalty which the Baptists held to be endangered: in Christ, in the Word of Christ, and in the Church and Ordinances of Christ.

The Baptist leaders desired to publish along with this pamphlet against the Quakers a statement of their faith, but it appears that so much need for haste was felt that there was not time to work out an original statement. Someone remembered that Thomas Lover (now de-

1. Vid. "To the Reader in behalf of the Author."

2. Whitley, Minutes of the General Assembly, p. 11-111, Vol. 1.

3. The True Gospel-Faith..., pp. 1-7.

ceased) had a few years previously prepared a Confession which bore the title, "The True Gospel-Faith Witnessed by the Prophets and Apostles, And Collected into Thirty Articles, Presented to the world as the present Faith and Practice of the Church of Christ." This Confession may have been a private one, possibly published following the appearance of the 1651 "Faith and Practice" of the Midland churches, or it may have been adopted by one or more churches. At any rate, nothing is known either of Thomas Lover or of his church, though Lover must have been an early leader among London General Baptists. His Confession was now taken over as the official statement of faith and practice of the represented congregations. It appears that no changes were made in it, and full credit for its authorship was given to Lover. Even Lover's original letter to the Reader was kept, and the first person singular in the first Article as well: "I believe" In Lover's letter the purpose of setting it forth was shown to be partly apologetic and partly missionary; and the purpose of the group now concerned with the Confession was quite the same.

In 1654 the leaders did have time to prepare a letter "To the Reader in behalf of the Author," and this was placed immediately after the author's letter. The leaders first gave thanks (in their letter) for the present breaking forth of the Gospel light in England so that the darkness of "the enchantments, abominations and filthy fornications of the scarlet-coloured Whore, Rev. 17:4," had been expelled. At the same time, they said,

"there is a generation of men in the world that do hate the light, and endeavor to put it out, crying against the Scripture of Truth, It's a dead Letter, and against the form of Doctrine therein contained, Rom. 6:17. as fleshly forms, and

too low for them to walk in; insomuch that we say with David, It is time for the Lord to work, for they have made void the Law, Psalm 119.126."

The three leaders in addition to John Griffith who signed this letter (and so the Confession) were John Foxwell, Thomas Parrett (or Perrott), and Francis Smith. It is to be supposed that all signed on behalf of their churches; but which churches did they represent? Aside from Griffith's connection with the Dunning's Alley Church, we cannot be certain. There is, of course, the possibility that these men were leaders of sections of a single church meeting in several parts of London. There were churches which met by sections for the convenience of their members. An argument against this arrangement in the case of these men, however, is the fact that all four of them were prominent in the largest circle of General Baptist affairs, the General Assembly. All but Smith signed the official statement of the first General Assembly, in 1654; Griffith and Parrett signed the Assembly's "Gennarel Agreement" of 1656; and Smith and Parrett signed the Confession of 1660. It later will be seen that the four were not working as a unit in 1659-60, which is another argument against the single-church theory. Foxwell signed the 1654 document of the Assembly as a Messenger, and he was evidently the only Messenger of the four. He seems to have had associations with Canterbury, but probably only in connection with his duties as Messenger. Smith was the well known Croydon book-seller on whose cooperation much of the success of the General Baptist propaganda campaign depended. He certainly was connected with the Glasshouse Yard Church by 1669. Thomas Parrett

1. Whitley, Minutes of the General Assembly, p. 217, Vol. 1.

2. Ibid., p. 228, and Whitley, The Baptists of London, p. 114.

1.

was a silk-dyer, as well as a pastor.

Eleven General Baptist churches, at least, are known to have existed in London before 1660: Bell Alley, led by Lamb and Barber (in two sections or, later, as two churches), Dockhead, led by John Clayton, Dunning's Alley, led by John Griffith, Tower Hill, led by Samuel Loveday, Paul's Alley (Barbican), led by John Gosnold, Old Jewry, led by Jeremiah Ives, William Russell's Church near Smithfield, Henry Adis' "Free-will" Church, Thomas Chamberlen's Seventh-Day Church, William Rider's Church (present-day Borough Road), and a Military Church at Aldgate, of which Mason, Chillenden, Danvers, and Oates were

2.

3.

leaders. There must have been others. Probably most of these were in existence by 1654, so certainly not all the General Baptist churches of London were represented by the Confession of 1654. It is probable that the few which were represented were those which were suffering most at the hands of the Quakers or which were most fearful concerning the possible effects on their fellowship of the work of the Quakers.

3.

The form which the Confession of 1654 took is more like that of the Particular Baptist Confession of 1644 than the Midland Confession of 1651, but even the form shows complete independence, and the Confession contains some novel aspects.

A. Theological Outlook

All thirty articles of the Confession are brief, and those which present the theological outlook are especially lacking in detail. The

1. Whitley (A Baptist Bibliography, p.225) names another General Baptist, Robert Perrott, as the signatory of the Confession, but both extant copies of the original have "Tho." as the first name.
2. Vid. Whitley, Minutes of the General Assembly,^{VI} pp.xvi and 1 ff, and Whitley, A Baptist Bibliography, p. 233 ff.
3. Vid. Whitley's list in The Baptists of London, pp.101-114.

usual General Baptist emphases are noted in the briefest manner. There is no mention of Election or Predestination, but reference is made to Christ's foreknowledge of those who would not believe on him.^{1.} Concerning the Fall, there is the statement by the author, "This onely have I found that God made man upright, and gave him power to rule over creatures on the earth," and that man broke God's Law and brought "death upon himself and all his posteritie."^{2.} Sin and death entered the world through the Fall, but death did not "pass on all men" because Adam sinned but rather because all have sinned. There is no thought of original guilt or depravity. God sent His Son into the world, out of His love, to die "for the sins of all men," and Christ did the will of His Father "in laying down his life for all sinners."^{3.} There is no doctrine of Perseverance, but those who keep the faith "to the end" shall be saved.

B. The Church

The teaching concerning the Church is somewhat more elaborate. The definition of the Church of Christ is, however, as brief as possible: a company of baptized believers.^{4.} The autonomy of each church regarding all matters affecting its life is asserted, but there is no mention of inter-church relations. The officers of a church are said to be Messengers, Pastors, and Teachers.^{5.} There is no mention of Deacons, and unless the office of Deacon was identical with that of Teacher these General Baptists were not in agreement with their early leader, Thomas Helwys, who said there are but two kinds of officers

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- 1. Article 1.
 - 2. Articles 1 and 2.
 - 3. Articles 4 and 5.
 - 4. Article 13.
 - 5. Article 22.

(other than Messengers) in the New Testament church, Elders and Deacons.
 Ministerial support is prescribed,^{1.} as are the usual disciplinary rules,
 including "the dutie of every one to tell his brother of his sin, see-
 ing him to offend."^{2.}

C. The Scriptures

It is surprising that there is no Article on the Scriptures in the Confession. In this respect the Confession is entirely unique among Baptist Confessions. Thomas Lover must have omitted such an Article only on the ground that the profuse use of Scripture proof-texts made its inclusion superfluous. The leaders in 1654 did not fail to note the omission, and they proceeded to state their position on the subject (which then seemed to them to be in sharpest focus) in their introductory letter. They said,

"we therefore do desire that whosoever read it [the Confession] may weigh the Scriptures produced; and if it be according to the Scriptures, there is light in it; for its [sic] the Scriptures of the Prophets and Apostles that we square our faith and practice by, accounting that light within (not witnessed by the Scriptures without) which some so much talk of to be deep darkness Let the Scripture therefore be the rule of thy faith and practice"

D. The Ordinances

Except when quoting Scripture, the Confession always uses "dipped" for baptized, and even after a quotation baptized is defined as "dipped" -- "in English." Dipping (Baptism) is to be observed by^{3.} believers alone. Article 29 might seem to indicate that these Baptists attached some saving significance to Baptism: "Whosoever believeth and is dipped, and abideth in the Commandments to the end shall be saved"; but the next Article corrects that impression by omitting

1. Article 24.
 2. Article 20.
 3. Article 11.

dipping, at least explicitly, when speaking of the fate of the wicked: "That whosoever believeth not, and walketh not in the commandments of God to the end...." A purely commemorative view of the Lord's Supper must have been held, for after urging the observance of the Ordinance the Confession says only: "Do this in remembrance of me, saith Christ."¹

E. Preaching and Missions

In addition to the instructions "That every member ought to exercise his gift for the benefit of others,"² and that a church should choose Messengers, there is a striking statement revelatory of the missionary interest of London General Baptists. Article 9 says, "That he [Christ] hath given down the Holy Spirit to his Servants, that they might make known to all nations the things that concern the name of Iesus and the Kingdom of Heaven." Missions was an idea central to their conception of the Church.

F. The Laying on of Hands

This is the first Baptist Confession to prescribe the laying on of hands for all believers. Article 12 says, "That God gives his Spirit to believers dipped (sic) through the prayer of faith and the laying on of hands," and quotes Acts 8:15, 8:17, 19:6, 5:32, and Ephesians 1:13-14 as authority. This practice of laying on of hands appears to have been but lately brought to the attention of Baptists,³ and John Griffith was a leading exponent of it. In 1654 he defended the practice in a pamphlet which opposed the view of Edward Harrison; but the practice was not in universal use among General Baptists.

1. Article 16.

2. Article 25.

3. Vid. Chapter IV.

G. A Quaker Kinship

It may seem that Article 10, which declares "That all ought to believe the things declared by the Spirit," was an addition made by the leaders in 1654 to the original Confession to accomodate the great Quaker emphasis. There is, however, no reason for supposing that the Article is a later addition when it is remembered that the doctrine of the immediate guidance of the Holy Spirit in the corporate life of the Church and in the lives of its members was a major emphasis of General Baptists long before the Quakers appeared. Here, as in many other respects, General Baptists and Quakers were closely akin, though they disagreed on the interpretation of the Spirit's leadership. Baptists held the Spirit never led independently of or contrary to the Word of God, the Scriptures.

4.

There is no evidence as to the effectiveness of this Confession in advancing the Baptist cause in London, or in defending it against the Quakers. The Quakers did take prompt notice of the stiffening of the opposition on the part of the General Baptists of whom Griffith was leader. In 1654 Edward Burrough answered Griffith's A Voice from the Word of the Lord, and in 1655 Richard Farnsworth published a^{1.} criticising answer to the Confession of 1654. Certainly some London General Baptists went over to the Quakers, but no entire church in London is known to have gone over as a unit. Perhaps the Confession steadied all London General Baptists, after making them aware of the serious danger in which they stood, for it does reflect a certain stability and maturity of thought which characterized the churches

1. Whitley, A Baptist Bibliography, pp.56 and 60.

represented by it. The Confession also gives us our best picture of the reaction of Baptists to the first serious effort of the Quakers "to conquer London." Beyond that, it illuminates some differences between some London General Baptists and their Midland brethren, which will be considered later, and some facts concerning the hazy subject of London General Baptist life between 1651 and 1660.

5.

The Confession of 1654 is very rare, copies of the original being found only at the Angus Library, Regent's Park College, Oxford, and at the British Museum. Apparently neither Underhill nor McGlothlin knew of its existence, and it has probably not been printed in modern times. A facsimile copy of the document found in the British Museum is included in this thesis under Appendix E.

IV. The Midland Particular Baptist Confession, 16551.

At the beginning of the Commonwealth Period Particular Baptist strength in the Midlands was not great, and in 1655 General Baptists still far outnumbered their Calvinistic brethren. The General Baptist Confession of 1651 had been signed by representatives of thirty congregations, all located within an area one hundred miles in length; but, when the Particular Baptists met in 1655 to constitute their Midland Association, there were but fourteen of their churches in the eight counties, and only seven of them were yet willing to associate in this organization. There was no Particular Baptist church in Staffordshire, and only one each in Leicestershire and Derbyshire.¹ With the open-communion Particular Baptist churches to the West, led by John Tombes, there seems to have been little if any intercourse.

There were two principal factors which led to the formation of the Midland Association in 1655. One was the general trend among Particular Baptist churches at that time toward associating. In the promoting of this associating of churches the lead was taken by the London churches, and there is evidence that they were concerned with the beginnings of the organization in the Midlands. That Daniel King, who was undoubtedly leading the Midland churches to associate, belonged to that circle is shown in a book of his which was published in London in 1650. In this book, A Way to Zion, which was an exposition of Baptist teaching, the Epistle Dedicatory was signed by Thomas Patient, John Spilsbury, William Kiffin, and John Pierson, all prominent leaders in London. These men express their regret at having been delayed in

1. Owen, Records of an Old Association, pp. 72-73.

publishing the work, and say, "... but to our knowledge such a Treatise hath been much longed for by many of the people of God in most of the Counties of England." Daniel King, in his letter to the Reader, refers to a time "not long since" when he lived in Coventry, and when parts of the contents of his book were preached to believers there, but he says that "of late" he has had occasion to be in "many parts of the Countrey...." ^{1.} Whitley calls him an evangelist, and says he had associations with Southwark, London, in 1652. Probably, at the suggestion of the London churches he was by 1655 giving much of his time to building up associations of churches in various parts of the country. How long he remained with the Warwick Church, in the name of which he signed the associating statement in 1655, is not known.

The other factor promoting or hastening the organization of the Midland Particular Association was the great activity of the Quakers in the Midlands in 1654-55. When King wrote A Way to Sion, he tried to refute the "Seekers," or "Waiters," some who

"conclude that there is no Sion yet on earth. Others, that there is a Sion, but she is in the Wildernesse, secret, hidden, not made visible. Others acknowledge a Sion, a Church, but cannot believe the right way to it is yet found out. They will have a Church, but will allow her no Ordinances, because she wanteth Apostles, miracles, and extraordinary gifts." ^{2.}

But when the London leaders finally had the book published, a year later, they described another group in their Epistle Dedicatory: some who were

"holding Christ to be a shadow, and all his Gospel and Ordinances like himselfe, fleshly and carnall. This generation of people have been of singular use in the hand of the Devill to advance his Kingdome, and to make war against the Kingdome of our Lord

1. A Baptist Bibliography, p. 222.

2. Vid. "To Reader." Cp. Seeker doctrines, Barclay, op. cit., pp. 175-176.

Jesus. Now none have beene more painfull than these have been of late, to poison the City, the Countrey, and Armie, so far as they could...."

It has been shown that Hubberthorn for a short period in 1654 preached the Quaker message in the Midlands. In the same year George Fox returned there, debated with some Baptists at Biddesley, Warwickshire,^{1.} and called a great "general meeting" which was attended by Quaker preachers from London, Bristol, and many other places.^{2.} Following that, in spite of the beginning of persecution in the Midlands, 1655 was a year of great activity for the Quakers there.^{3.} Fox was present to direct his preachers for at least part of the year,^{4.} and to engage "several Baptists" in debate at Sileby, Leicestershire.^{5.}

2.

In the light of these events some Midland Particular Baptists churches listened quite readily to Daniel King's call to associate. Representatives of seven churches met at Warwick on May 3, 1655, in a preliminary session to consider certain Articles of Faith which might serve as the doctrinal basis for their intended Association. The churches were located in the Counties of Warwick, Gloucester, Oxford, and Derby. There may have been other preliminary meetings of the brethren.^{6.} Correspondence had evidently made the messengers ready for their task, for they proceeded at once to the solemn business of considering the doctrines agreement on which should be a basis of union. When they had examined and approved sixteen Articles, they appointed a second meeting to be held at Moreton-in-the-Marsh, on

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1. Langley, A.S., "Seventeenth Century Baptist Disputations," in Transactions Baptist Hist. Soc., Vol.6 (1918-19), pp.113-114.
 2. Harvey, op. cit., p. 98.
 3. Braithwaite, op. cit., p. 128.
 4. Braithwaite, op. cit., pp. 201-202.
 5. Langley, supra.
 6. Stokes, op. cit., pp. 22-23.

June 26, at which there would be formal adoption of the Confession by the churches and the real beginning of their associational life. Before the June meeting each church carefully examined and solemnly adopted the Articles as its own creed. Full agreement was thus reported at Moreton-in-the-Marsh, and signatures were affixed to the Articles and to a statement of purpose:

"We do therefore ... mutually acknowledge each other to be true churches of Christ; and that it is our duty to hold communion with each other ... and so to be helpful each to the other, as the Lord shall give opportunity and ability, endeavoring that we may all increase more and more, in faith and knowledge, in all purity and holiness, to the honour of our God. And it is our resolution, in the strength of Christ to endeavor to do so." 1.

The representatives subscribing were as follows:

For Warwick	Daniel King and Henry Vincent
For Norton	John Mayo and Jo. Marr (or Man)
For Bourton-on-the-Water..	Henry Collins, Jo. Mitchell and Anthony Collett.
For Alcester	Thomas Arme and Stephen Wade
For Hook Norton	James Wilmot and Math. Toyton
For Derby	Henry Davis and Will. Tomlison (or Tomlinson).

It was decided to meet again in the autumn of that year at Moreton; and the meetings proving very profitable, the Association also met three times the next year.² At a meeting on September 15, 1657, Leominster and Hereford Churches joined the Association, and in 1658 the Churches at Gloucester and Bewdley were proposed for reception.³

Daniel King was a lay-preacher whose educational opportunities evidently had been limited. When he was "pressed" in 1649 to publish, he wrote that he had beforehand had no intention of bringing anything

1. Stokes, op. cit., pp. 26-28

2. Ibid.

3. "Dissent in Worcestershire during the Seventeenth Century," in Transactions Baptist Hist. Soc., Vol. 7 (1920-21), pp. 5-6.

of his 'to publique view.'^{1.} After that, however, in 1650-51, he had published several doctrinal treatises which show him to have been a man of insight and ability. He had only laymen as his companions in preparing and signing the 1655 Confession. These were busy men who had little use for abstract language, so their Confession is brief and pointed. Its brevity fitted the purpose of its preparation. When the Circular Letter of the Association went out to the churches, reporting the proceedings of the meetings, the Confession appeared at its head as a kind of standard.^{2.} It also found its way into local church books.^{3.}

3.

The Confession of 1655 must have been modelled on the London Confession of 1644 (probably the 1651 Edition), but its statements are original. Its noteworthy characteristics might be seen under several heads.

A. Theological Outlook

At points it seems nearer the Westminster Confession than the Confession of 1644, but this impression may be due, in part, to the extreme brevity of the statements which concern its theological outlook. In spite of its brevity, the theological portion is a careful and praiseworthy summary of Calvinistic Baptist doctrine of the middle of the seventeenth century. The authors may have known of the "Twenty Articles of Fundamental Doctrines" which the second Assembly of Divines reported to the first Protectorate Parliament in December, 1654. Again, if Daniel King had at an earlier date been a General

1. Stokes, op. cit., pp. 15-16.

2. Owen, op. cit., pp. 72-73.

3. Vid. "Association Life till 1815," in Transactions Baptist Hist. Soc., Vol. 5 (1916-17), p. 23 f.

Baptist, as Whitley^{1.} supposes, his reaction against Arminianism might explain the strength of the Calvinism of the Confession.

After two Articles dealing with the being and attributes of God and the Trinity, Article 3 declares that the Holy Scriptures are "the word and revealed mind of God ... given by inspiration of God..." and that "by them we are (in the strength of Christ) to try all things whatsoever are brought to us, under the pretence of truth."^{2.} The latter conviction is immediately demonstrated in well chosen, but not numerous, Scripture references following the Articles. The doctrines of the Fall, of Election, and of Perseverance are dealt with in the next three Articles. Simple and unmistakable are these statements:
Adam in his Fall

"overthrew, not only himself, but his posterity, making them sinners by his disobedience; so that they are by nature children of wrath, and defiled from the womb, being shapen in iniquity and conceived in sin." ... "God elected and chose, in his eternal counsel, some persons to life and salvation, before the foundation of the world, whom accordingly he doth and will effectually call, and whom he doth so call, he will certainly keep by his power, through faith to salvation." ... "...election was free in God, of his own good pleasure, and not at all for ... any foreseen works of faith in the creature, as the motive thereunto."

There is no mention of the non-elect, or of reprobation.

Five articles are given to Christology -- more than to any other subject. The Person of Christ undoubtedly dominated the theology of

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1. In Minutes of the General Assembly,^{Vol. 1.} p. xxxviii, King is named among early General Baptist leaders. His single association with General Baptists which I have discovered, however, is the publishing of one of his books in 1663 by Francis Smith, the General Baptist book-seller.
 2. All quotations from the Confession are from the copy in McGlothlin, Baptist Confessions of Faith, pp. xviii-xx, edited by W. G. Owen from several church books in 1905.

of the authors. Here the Confession was like that of Westminster; but, if the Westminster Confession sounded no certain note on the question of the Extent of Redemption, as Beveridge^{1.} says, this one did. Christ, it said, "gave himself for the elect..."^{2.}; faith in Him is possible only as the free gift of God.

B. Baptism

Articles 13 and 14 concern Baptism. The subjects of baptism are declared to be those who have professed faith in Christ, and have made "the same appear by their fruits." This emphasis on the place of Christian works as outward evidences of conversion before baptism reminds one of the words of Menno Simons, though there is no suggestion that the idea came from him:

'If you want to be saved you must have reformed your worldly, sensual, godless life, for the whole Scripture with all its exhortations, menaces, punishments, miracles, examples, ceremonies, and sacraments, is nothing but penance and reform; and if you are not penitent, no heaven or earth can help you, for without true penitence nothing avails.'^{3.}

This postponing of baptism also reminds one of the great distance at which these Baptists stood from any sacramental understanding of the Ordinance. The group was more concerned with building pure churches than with baptizing people. And, in the face of the Westminster Confession's declaration, "Dipping of the person into the water is not necessary; but baptism is rightly administered by pouring or sprinkling water upon the person,"^{4.} this one said, "...this baptizing is not

1. Op. cit., pp. 114-115.

2. Article 7.

3. Collins, "Dutch Dissenters and English Baptists," in Transactions Baptist Hist. Soc., Vol. 4 (1914-15), p. 70, quoting Kuhler, De Beteekenis van de Dissenters in de Kirkgeschiedenis von Neederland door, Leiden, 1913.

4. Article 28, Part III.

by sprinkling, but dipping of the person in the water, representing the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ."

C. The Church

Article 15 describes the "distinct churches" in which the baptized people ought, "by free consent," to walk. The clause enjoining the observance of "all" the Ordinances of Christ in His Church until His return is obviously aimed at the Quakers, through whose influence some were despising, or at least neglecting the Ordinances.

4.

The primary purpose of this Confession was not apologetic. With a clear understanding of its precepts, the people it represented would, of course, be apologists for its positions; but, the Confession was to find its immediate use in connection with the Association, in the churches, and at the firesides of its people. Its usefulness was not soon lost. In 1688 when the Particular Baptist General Assembly met and sought to set forth an up-to-date doctrinal expression for the group, Stokes^{1.} says the 1655 declaration was furbished up and elaborated into the best known of all Baptist Confessions. Thus after thirty-three years that which was wanting of breadth and comprehensiveness in the Midland Confession was made up in the Confession of 1688. Of the scripturalness and acumen of the doctrinal positions of both Confessions the historian of the Midland Association has said, "No human system of doctrines and precepts can be more scriptural than this, and none more expressive of the nature and design of the Lively Oracles."^{2.}

1. Op. cit., pp. 15-16.

2. Stokes, op. cit., pp. 15-16.

5.

The Confession of 1655 probably was not published by its authors^{1.} and subscribers. It was edited in 1909 from several church books by the Reverend W. Gwynne Owen, and the Baptist Historical Society added this edition to its Supplement to McGlothlin's Baptist Confessions of Faith.^{2.}

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1. The Tewkesbury and Bourton Church Books. See Owen, Records of an Old Association, pp. 72-73.
 2. Pages xviii-xx.

V. The Somerset (Particular Baptist) Confession, 16561.

The great Particular Baptist Apostle to the West of England was Thomas Collier, once "an illiterate carter or husbandman,"^{1.} but later a lay-preacher of extraordinary gifts and energy. There seems to have been hardly a place in Wessex which he did not visit in his evangelistic tours. At various times he was reported as preaching at Guildford, Poole, Lymington, Southampton, Taunton, Luppit, and Guernsey (where he was imprisoned for preaching).^{2.} Of course he founded churches, and to these he was writing "Generall Epistles" by 1649.^{3.}

Collier himself may have been the chief link among the churches, but it is evident that there was a kind of brotherhood among them by 1651. Collier continued to write epistles to the churches, and on November 6-7, 1653, representatives of the churches met at Wells to discuss several matters, foremost of which was the question of the laying on of hands for all baptized believers. This question was a live one in Baptist churches all over England at that time; but, like most Particular Baptist churches, this group decided that laying on of hands was not an Ordinance of Christ, "there being no word left for our practice thereof," and that the practice of or failure to practice the rite was no cause of breach of communion between churches.^{4.} Previous meetings are implied, but Collier calls this "the First" among several meetings of the Association between 1653 and 1657.^{5.} If the 1653 meeting saw the organization of the Association, only the Berkshire Association

1. Gordon, in Dictionary of National Biography, Vol.11, pp.354-355.

2. Whitley, History of British Baptists, p. 72.

3. Whitley, A Baptist Bibliography, p. 40.

4. Collier, Several Resolutions and answers to Queries

5. Ibid.

among Particular Baptists (outside of London at least) in England was older than this. The Somerset (or Western) Association had Somerset as its center and included several adjacent counties. It met again in 1654, first at Wells on January 26-27, and then at Taunton on July 18-20. In 1655 there were two meetings, at Bridgewater and Chard, and the eastern boundary of the Association was drawn to include Dalwood, Lyme, and Upottery, but to exclude Hampshire.¹ By that year Collier² had two assistant evangelists, Sims and Row, and in that year he was officially appointed "General Superintendent and Messenger to all the Associated Churches,"³-- something of a new office among Particular Baptists, but well known to General Baptists. At a meeting of 1654 a letter was prepared and sent to the Irish Baptists expostulating with them for taking State-pay for their ministers, which shows that the Western Association churches were conscious of a larger Baptist fellowship. At about the same time, Collier was having his hands full steadying the churches against the Fifth-Monarchy influences of Jessey⁴ and Pendarvis, who had recently visited his district.

The seventh meeting of the group took place at Bridgewater on September 5-6, 1656, at which time a Confession of Faith was approved. It was evidently the work of Collier, but the fact that decisions in favor of some of the positions announced in the Confession were made at this meeting would indicate that he had help in the preparation of the Confession. We have more details concerning the early life of

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1. Whitley, "Early Baptists in Hampshire," in The Baptist Quarterly, Vol. 1 (1922-23), p. 223.
 2. Ibid.
 3. McGlothlin, Baptist Confessions of Faith, p. 201.
 4. Whitley, History of British Baptists, p. 72. It might be noted, however, that the first Circular Letter of this Association was signed by Collier and this same Pendarvis. Vid. Associational Letters, Bristol Baptist College Library.

this Association than concerning that of any other Association because Collier prepared a pamphlet entitled,

Several Resolutions and answers to Queries, sent in from several Congregations, at several general meetings of Messengers from the said Congregations, in the county of Somerset and the Counties near adjacent. 1.

The questions therein concern matters of practice, rather than of belief, and Collier may have intended his pamphlet to serve the churches as a guide as the Midland General Baptists, no doubt, intended the "Practice" section of their "Faith and Practice" to serve. It is remarkable that matters of practice seem to have been almost identical in the two groups, Midland General and Western Particular Baptists.

The Confession was not the first thing Collier published. As active in writing as in preaching, he had published no less than seventeen works between 1645 and 1656.² One of these had been A Vindication of the Army Remonstrance (1648), which shows his political feelings; others had concerned theological and ecclesiastical subjects: The Marrow of Christianity (1647), The heads and substance of a discourse ... (concerning the person of Christ, the Trinity, etc.) (1651), The Right Constitution and true subjects of the visible church of Christ (1654). His immediate concern in 1656, however, is seen in the titles of the two works, beside the Confession, he published that year: A dialogue ... about the authority of the scriptures, and the principles of the Quakers, and A Looking-glasse for the Quakers.³

2.

It is evident from the Epistle Dedicatory that Quakers were

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1. To be found only in the Bristol Baptist College Library.
 2. Vid. Whitley, A Baptist Bibliography.
 3. Whitley, A Baptist Bibliography, pp. 63-64.

chiefly responsible for the appearance of the Confession in 1656. The authors say two facts have caused them to set forth their beliefs. First, there has been a "general charge" that their churches are not Calvinistic and so are out of accord with the London Particular churches. This they straitly deny, saying that they own both the London brethren and the Confession of Faith of those brethren.¹ Second, they are

"very sensible of the great distractions and divisions that are amongst professing people in this nation, the many ways and wiles of Satan to seduce and deceive souls, the great departing from the faith, and that under glorious notions of spiritualness and holiness...."

Without mentioning the Quakers by name, they go on to say that,

"They sow the wind, and shall reap the whirlwind, if mercy do not recover them again, who lay aside Christ, scripture, and obedience all at once, subjecting themselves to a suggestion, a voice within them, more than the mind of God, written in the holy scriptures; who lay aside Christ in all his offices." 2.

There follows an eloquent plea to the "Sons and Daughters of Zion":

"Oh! let not any of us, who have owned the Lord, part with him because others do it; or trample under foot his ordinances, because we see and hear other do it. ... Let it be your great care to press after, and live more in the power of the Gospel." 3.

And if it be asked what the Gospel is, here it is in brief:

"... we believe ... that Jesus Christ crucified was raised again by the power of God, and is the way, the truth, and the life; that we are justified by faith in his blood; that a person justified is to live to him and obey him, according to his will in scripture; that he is ascended into the heavens, and is with the Father, making intercession for his people; that he will come again, and change and raise his people, and judge, and reign and rule,&c., and his people shall reign with him,&c." 4.

What particular knowledge had Thomas Collier of the Quakers that

1. Underhill, Confessions of Faith, p. 63.

2. Ibid., p. 65.

3. Ibid., p. 66.

4. Ibid., p. 72.

he should speak against them with so much feeling? Early in 1654 the Quaker pioneers, Audland and Ayrey, moved on Bristol, skirting Wales and preaching as they went. Once in Bristol, Audland appears to have gone straight to a Baptist meeting, where his preaching was well received.^{1.} He and Ayrey soon moved on to preach in many places in Somersetshire and adjacent counties, after which they returned to London.^{2.} Before leaving for London, however, they ran into Baptist opposition and, in July, were drawn into a debate with some Baptists at Broadmead, Bristol, on "the inner light."^{3.} By October Audland returned to Bristol with John Canne at his side.^{4.} They were given a tremendous reception, thousands attending upon their outdoor preaching. All Bristol was greatly excited.^{5.} Soon the preachers were being joined by "Publishers of Truth" newly recruited in the Southwest of England. From Somerset alone came in those days such noted witnesses as Jasper Batt, John Pittman, John Dando, Thomas Whitehead, John Anderton, Christopher Bacon, Petter Walter, Alexander Parker, and Jane Waugh.^{6.} Many Baptists were being attracted by the new movement, and Baptist churches faced a grim task in trying to maintain unity and peace in their fellowship. Braithwaite^{7.} admits the Quaker movement became strong in Somerset largely through winning Baptists. More fuel was added to the Quaker fire with the coming of George Fox, toward the end of 1655, on a tour of the Southwest. He and his company passed through Dorset and Devon before being arrested at St. Ives

1. Braithwaite, op. cit., pp. 157-158.

2. Penney (editor), "The First Publishers of Truth," p. 226.

3. Lanøley, A.S., loc. cit., in Transactions Baptist Hist. Soc., Vol. 6, (1918-19).

4. Braithwaite, op. cit., pp. 165-167.

5. Braithwaite, op. cit., p. 171.

6. Penney, supra, pp. 222-223.

7. The Beginnings of Quakerism, pp. 385-386.

and imprisoned at Launceston in Cornwall. From his prison, however,^{1.} Fox was able to broadcast his teachings with amazing effectiveness. The Quaker enthusiasm might have gone on unchecked in the district but for the conduct of James Naylor in 1656.

Naylor, a very attractive young man and considered the most brilliant of Quaker preachers, reached Bristol after successful service in London. He was surrounded by admirers, some of them women, whom he permitted to pay him the most extravagant flattery and homage. Following an imprisonment which befell him as result of his effort to visit Fox, himself still in prison at Launceston, he returned to Bristol accompanied by the adoring shouts of six companions. He being seated on horseback, and his admirers going before him strewing handkerchiefs, hoods, and gloves in the way, shouting "Hosanna!" and singing "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Sabaoth," the scene took on the appearance of a triumphal entry. All members of the party were straightway arrested,^{2.} and news of the whole incident spread rapidly over the country. Naylor's "Fall" prejudiced the cause of Quakerism, and proved to be a turning point in its story, especially in the Southwest. Thomas Collier hastened to write his A Looking-glasse for Quakers, in which he told of Naylor's "exaltation" in several towns, Taunton, Glastonbury, and Wells, in addition to that in Bristol; and in which was reflected the now general impression of the dangerous tendency of Quaker principles. When Fox was released from prison and returned to Bristol in 1656, the Baptists were ready to challenge him, and Paul Gwin engaged him in debate in an orchard.^{3.}

1. Emmott, op. cit., pp. 145-146.

2. Ibid., pp. 156-157, and Collier, A Looking-glasse for Quakers, p. 15.

3. Langley, loc. cit., Transactions Baptist Hist. Soc., Vol. 6 (1918-19)

Before Naylor's Fall, however, representatives of the churches of the Western Association were in session on September 5-6, 1656, at Bridgewater. The Quaker fire was then burning menacingly around them. The Confession of Faith which the churches decided at that meeting to publish may have been originally drawn up before 1656, possibly in 1653 when it, like the Midland Particular Association Confession, would have served as a basis of association, for the authors say that "when the Lord set us first upon this work, we did not think of bringing it to public view," but meant it to "try our unity in the faith."¹ The following churches were represented in the signing of the Confession's Epistle Dedicatory: Bridgewater, Taunton, Ryden, Hatch, Chazrd, Somerton, Wells, Stoak, Wincanton, Monticue (all in Somerset), North Bradley (in Wilts.), Luppit (in Devon), Sedbury, Bristol (in Gloucester), and Lime. (in Dorset).

3.

The Confession bears the mark of careful preparation, and the impress of Collier can be seen at various points.

A. Theological Outlook

While an effort is made to approximate the theological position of the Confession of 1644, there is complete independence of expression, and there are some notable omissions of material in the older document. Election is dealt with in Article 9:

"That God in his Son did freely, without respect to any work done, or to be done by them as a moving cause, elect and choose some to himself before the foundation of the world. Whom he in time hath, doth, and will call, justify, sanctify, and glorify";

1. Underhill, op. cit., p. 63.

but the elect also are "by nature (before conversion) children of wrath even as others."¹ The doctrine of Perseverance is set forth in the words, "That those that are chosen of God, called and justified, shall never finally fall from him, but being born from above are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation." 2. Concerning the Fall, Article 4 says that when Adam broke God's law he "brought himself and his posterity under the guilt and judgment denounced"[sic]; and man is consequently in an "undone estate."³ Christ suffered on the cross to obtain "eternal redemption and deliverance for his church."⁴ These are the distinctively Calvinistic statements in the Confession; so clearly the Calvinism of the Western Association was not of a rigid type. Perhaps there was some ground for the saying that these Baptists did not have quite the same theological outlook as their London brethren. McGlothlin may be partly right when he suggests that this Confession was put forth because there was "some jealousy and fear of the London churches on the part of those in the country."⁵ However, it is improbable that this fear was of the authority of the London churches -- though Jessey's visit in 1655 could conceivably have suggested that to some -- so much as of the theology of some London Baptists. Collier, as a lay-evangelist, was troubled by some of the same practical difficulties which the General Baptists said they saw in the doctrine of a restricted or particular atonement. He was wary of anything which might hinder the spirit of evangelism; yet he liked the Calvinistic framework, and was himself, indeed, a

1. Article 10, Underhill, op. cit., p. 78.

2. Article 11, Ibid., pp. 78, 79.

3. Article 5, Ibid., pp. 75-76.

4. Article 15, Ibid., pp. 80-81

5. Op. cit., p. 201

Calvinist.

Collier's outlook is gathered from his records of the association-al meetings. In 1654 at Taunton the question was asked the Association:

"Whether a member varying from the Faith, which at his admission he professt, as in respect of free will, general election, and falling from grace, the Church may proceed to reject him without some other occasion?"

The answer given was:

"A person holding general redemption, free will, and falling from grace, stifly persisting therein, with an unquiet and disturbing spirit, notwithstanding the clear light of the Scripture brought against his errour to convince him, after due admonition, is to be rejected."

More to the point was the decision of the 1655 meeting at Chard. The question was, "Whether Christ Jesus our Lord, dyed for all and every man, or for the elect only, and if for all, then how far?" The answer given was:

"Our Lord Jesus Christ died for all and every man. Heb.2.9 first to reconcile all to God so as to have their being continued by him, Col. 1.20 secondly that repentance and remission of sins, might be preacht in his name to all men, Lk. 24.47, Mk.16.15,16 thirdly that so he might be Lord of all, Rom. 14.9 Phil.2.8,9. fourthly that he might raise all from the dead in the order and times appointed by the father, I.Cor.15.21,22,23. yet he died not intentionally alike for all, John 17.12...." 1.

It is important to note that there were many General Baptists within the area of the Western Association, and the Confession of 1656 undoubtedly represents an attempt to unite all Baptists of the district irrespective of their Calvinism or Arminianism. From the General Baptist side, it appears from questions arising at association-al meetings, some practices which were in more common use among General Baptists were being urged upon the Particular churches. One question discussed by the Association was, "Whether it be a duty of

1. Several Resolutions and answers of Queries

an elder in the church to anoint the sick with oyle according to James 5:14," and another was, "Whether it be an Ordinance of Christ for Disciples to wash one another's feet according to John 13.14." The Association refused to give a negative answer to either of these, but left the matters for local decision.^{1.} Collier was not bowing to expediency when he held out a hand to General Baptists; he was but following his convictions. This he continued to do even when his doctrines ran head-on into the stiffening Calvinism of Nehemiah Cox (more stern Calvinist than even his father Benjamin) and some other London Particular Baptists in 1677.^{2.} Now, however, he believed himself to be a Calvinist and in essential agreement with his London brethren.

B. The Church and Baptism

That there be no misunderstanding concerning the place of Baptism, the definition of the Church is placed under the Article on Baptism. It is the duty of those who have repented and who have faith in God to be baptized ("dipped or buried under the water") "in the name of our Lord Jesus" ... "Or in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit" [two acceptable formulae]. Baptism is said to signify a washing away of sin, and the death, burial, and resurrection of the believer with Christ. The visible church is planted with the baptism of believers, and it is defined as "a company of men and women separated out of the world by the preaching of the gospel" who "do walk together in communion, in all the commandments of Jesus ... wherein God is glorified and their souls comforted."^{3.} The emphases here sound like the old General Baptist definitions, or the Separatist

1. Several Resolutions and answers of Queries

2. Vindiciae Veritatis

3. Article 24, Underhill, op. cit., pp. 89-90.

Confession of 1596: first, in the place of separation from the world, second, in the covenant concern with conduct rather than with belief. On the latter point Article 25 goes into detail, naming twenty-one commandments of Jesus which should be followed in regulation of the conduct of a Christian. The last of these was actually a commandment to the church, and one which was distinctively Baptist:

"That in admitting of members into the church of Christ, it is the duty of the church and ministers whom it concerns, in faithfulness to God, that they be careful they receive none but such as do make forth evident demonstration of the new birth, and the work of faith and power."

This admonition is supported by eight Scripture references!

The right of a church to choose and ordain its ministers is upheld, as is the duty of the church to provide "a comfortable subsistence" for its ministers, "If they [the church] be able."¹ Yet, in cases of necessity, it is commendable for ministers to labor with their hands. Some matters of church polity were still in process of being worked out, or had only recently been agreed upon. In 1654, at a meeting of the Association, the churches agreed that it was in order for assemblies of single sections of a scattered church to observe the Lord's Supper if "ministering brethren" were among them; but more light was sought on this subject. At a 1655 meeting, the question was asked, "Whether a Church of Christ, having no Officers elected among them, may notwithstanding appoint members for the administration of any or all the Ordinances of Christ?" The answer was that such members as had been instrumental in gathering the church should assist the church in naming qualified brethren to look after the matter

1. Articles 31-32, Underhill, op. cit., pp. 95-96.

temporarily; but as a general rule (certainly not to be applied in all cases), one who administers the Ordinances ought to be an officer of the church. Any General Baptist church might have given that same answer. An illuminating word came from the 1655 meeting at Chard. The question was asked, "Whether the power of the keys spoken of in Matt. 16.19 ... be given to the Church or to the eldership in the Church?" The churches answered that "the exercise of the power of Christ in a Church, having officers, in opening and shutting, in receiving in and casting out, belongs to the Church with its eldership."¹ Article 33 dedicates the churches to the proposition that the ministry of the church should be an orderly one, in contradiction to the practices of the Quakers. As for the inter-relations of the churches, it was agreed "That it is the duty of the members of Christ in the order of the gospel, though in several congregations and assemblies (being one in the Head), if occasion be, to communicate each to other, in things spiritual and things temporal."²

C. The Missionary Obligation of a Church

Article 34 is one of the clearest statements on the missionary obligation of a church to be heard before William Carey:

"... it is an ordinance of Christ, so it is the duty of his church, in his authority to send forth such brethren as are fitly gifted and qualified through the Spirit of Christ, to preach the gospel to the world."

Foreign missions were not, of course, specifically in mind, but preaching to "the world" must sooner or later involve foreign as well as home missions. The matter had been debated at an associational meeting at Bridgewater, on February 17-19, 1655, and Collier reports the

1. Several Resolutions and answers to Queries
 2. Article 28, Underhill, op. cit., p. 93.

question as, "Whether it be according to the minde of the Lord for the Church to send forth an Elder to preach the Gospel to the world, or to assist the Churches?" The agreement reached was "that they may do so, provided that the Church be so provided for in the mean time, that neither God be dishonoured, nor the Church wronged" Then the group stated the grounds, as they saw them, for sending forth members to preach and minister: "first from the common membership that is in all the Churches, all make up but one body though many, therefore as members of that body they should assist each other" (by means of Messengers); and second, it is

"the duty both of Church and Elders to improve their talents that way in which they may most glorify God: if the Church at such a time can part with an Elder, then he may most honour God, where there is most need, and this answers that clause of sending to the world...." 1.

In their Confession the Association went further in urging that evangelizing the world was, provided Christ was the foundation, "a sure guide, rule, and direction, in the darkest time of the anti-christian apostacy, or spiritual Babylonish captivity, to direct, inform, and restore us in our just freedom and liberty, to the right worship and order belonging to the church of Jesus Christ." 2. These Baptists were not daunted by the size of their task; they meant to undertake the erection of an entirely new world-Church structure on the apostolic model.

D. Some Peculiarities of the Confession

Reflections of the personality and interests of Thomas Collier are unmistakable. For example, this is the only Baptist Confession

1. Vid. Several Resolutions and answers to Queries
 2. Articles 29-30, Underhill, op. cit., pp. 93-95.

which includes an Article on the Jews and the attitude that Christians should take toward them. The ubiquitous Quakers were partly responsible for this Article, having in 1656 debated with Collier the question of the Jews' admission to England.¹ Collier was interested in the evangelization of Jews, and published in 1656 A brief answer to some of the objections made against the coming in of the Jews in this Commonwealth,² for which he was strongly criticized in some quarters.

The great emphasis in the Confession on obedience to "the ordinances of Christ," though this was everywhere a Baptist fundamental, must have been due, in part, to the experiences of Collier. He tells us in the Epistle Dedicatory to his, The Right Constitution and True Subjects of the Visible Church that he was once "against the practice of Ordinances," and then he asks, "Whence is it that I am now so zealous for them?" His answer to that question is,

"... I thought there was a life above them, without them: but God hath been pleased of his abundant goodness to clear up my understanding more fully in his mind concerning his will herein, and I do believe that God was pleased to let me fall in this particular, that being converted I might strengthen my brethren & be filled with so much the more zeal for his name and truth..."

3.

The place given to the covenants, and the curious list of characteristics of the true church in the concluding Article must also be products of Collier's mind. Beyond him, however, one must look for the source of the unusual Articles on Angelology and the elaborate eschatology of the Confession. The doctrines set forth in these areas were called for by certain denials of the Quakers. Quaker pressure is evident in many places in the Confession. We know something

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1. Langley, loc., cit. The Quakers in the debate opposed the admission of the Jews.
 2. Whitley, A Baptist Bibliography, p. 62.
 3. Collier published in 1659, A Discourse of the true gospel blessedness in the new covenant. Vid. Whitley, A Baptist Bibliography, p. 73.

of the influence which the Friends were having on some of these Baptists through questions asked at 1654 and 1656 associational meetings. Two of these were: "Whether baptism be absolutely necessary to an orderly Church covenant?" and "Whether a servant of the Lord may purpose what to speak to the world or to the Church before hand, and search the Scriptures concerning it?"^{1.}

4.

The Confession is notable on two accounts: first, it represents the earliest important effort at bringing Particular and General Baptists into agreement and union and second, it clearly enunciates three distinctively Baptist principles. The effort to unite the two groups of Baptists was only partially successful, though in the area of the Western Association occurred perhaps the earliest experiment in this kind of union in all England. The Confession was instrumental in drawing the two groups into a gradual combination of forces until, later in the century when General Baptists came to outnumber Particular Baptists and there was a defection of the latter.^{2.} It is remarkable that at only one point in the Confession does there appear to be a departure from usual General Baptist practice, and that is the prohibition against women speaking in the church.^{3.}

The distinctive Baptist emphases which found new or fresh expression in the Confession were, first, the duty of a church to receive only those who gave evidence of having been regenerated; second, the right of a church to call out and ordain its own ministers; and

1. Vid. Several Resolutions and answers to Queries.

2. McGlothlin, op. cit., p. xvii.

3. Article 25, Underhill, op. cit., pp. 90-92.

third, the obligation of the church to send representatives to preach the Gospel to the world. These principles were by the Confession brought to public attention, and by their practice the immediate challenge of the Quakers was met and defeated and the omnipresent challenge of the world was faced by a united group of evangelistic churches, numbers of which continue to this day.

5.

Original copies of this Confession are to be found in the British Museum, the Bodleian Library, Oxford, and the Manchester Baptist College Library, Manchester.^{1.} Facsimile copies of the Confession are in Underhill, Confessions of Faith, and McGlothlin, Baptist Confessions of Faith.

1. Whitley, A Baptist Bibliography, p. 63.

VI. A Welsh General Baptist Confession

1.

It is supposed that the first Nonconformist minister in Wales was William Wroth, Rector of Llanfaches in Monmouthshire, who began to preach "in a very different way from the common clergy," about ^{1.} 1620. He was soon joined by Walter Craddock and William Erbury, both Oxford men, and both apparently being challenged to leave their studies by the appalling spiritual darkness in the Principality. The first vernacular Bible for public use in Wales appeared as late as ^{2.} 1630, and, as will be shown, in spite of an awakening there in 1640, ^{3.} general religious conditions had not improved much by 1650, when Parliament felt called upon to give special attention to Wales. Joshua Thomas, the official Welsh Baptist historian, records the supposition, "from circumstances," that a Baptist church was founded at Olchon ^{4.} about 1633. The Church at Olchon, of which Howell Vaughan was the minister, probably was Baptist only in the sense that it had some people of anti-paedobaptist sentiment among its members, and since it did not carry Baptist ideas further into Wales, it had no vital connection with the Baptist movement which soon appeared there. That movement, as in England, came in two streams, General and Particular, which appeared at about the same time during the early days of the civil wars. Hugh Evans and his General Baptist group have precedence in the story.

Evans worked as a young man as a clothing apprentice in Worcester;

1. Thomas, A History of the Baptist Association in Wales, pp.3-5.

2. Ibid.

3. The Baptists in Radnorshire, pp. 770-771, Misc. Pamphlets, Vol.X, Regent's Park College, Oxford

4. Thomas, supra.

then he moved to Coventry where he joined the General Baptist Church which was one of the five churches of that connection existing in 1626. Knowing that 'his native country of Wales did not receive the proper administration of the ordinance of Jesus Christ,'^{1.} he returned there for the purpose of evangelizing, about 1646, being accompanied by his pastor, Jeremiah Ives. Ives, after a while, had to return to his work in Coventry, but such able men as Daniel Penry, Rees Davies, Evan Oliver, Henry Gregory, and John Prosser identified themselves with the General Baptist cause. Two other early leaders, John Price of Maes-y-gelli near Nantmel, and William Bound of Garthfawr near Llandinam,^{2.} give us, in a pamphlet defending the memory of Hugh Evans against the accusations of the Quakers, most of the information we have concerning the beginnings of the group. Evans' headquarters was Llanhir, though for a time he was an itinerant under the parliamentary Act of Propagation.^{3.} General Baptists flourished in Radnor and on the upper Wye. Their position was a somewhat isolated one, though their practice of close-communion is not to be traced to this fact. They continued to look to Coventry as their mother church, and their practices were probably those of the Coventry Church. Furthermore, London General Baptists were represented among them in the person of Thomas Lamb of Bell Alley, who in 1651 or 1652 became Propagation "lecturer" at the town of Brecon.^{4.}

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1. This clause is quoted in Richards, The Puritan Movement in Wales, p. 209.
 2. The pamphlet was The Sun outshining the Moon (1658).
 3. This Act of January, 1650, was designed to bring the Welsh clergy into conformity with the English clergy and to promote the cause of religion generally. Reference to the work of Evans under the Act is made in Richards, The Puritan Movement in Wales, p. 209.
 4. Richards, Religious Developments in Wales, 1642-62, pp. 257-258.

2.

1.

Richards is of the opinion that either Jeremiah Ives, who was "one of the most noted champions of adult baptism in his generation," or Thomas Lamb, the equally able and famous London pastor-evangelist, was responsible for the Welsh General Baptist Confession of Faith known as Harlian MS. 6898,² at the side of which the name of "Vavasour Powell" has been written. Certainly Powell had nothing to do with the Confession, and the error of Champlin Burrage³ in attributing the Confession to Powell is amazing. The lower part of the final page of the original manuscript, which would have contained the signature or signatures, has been cut off, and Powell's name (not in his handwriting) added at the side. It is upon examining the contents of the Confession, however, that one becomes convinced that the Confession is not the work of Powell. It is strongly Arminian, while Powell was without doubt a Calvinist. If the Confession be assigned a later date when Powell's Calvinism might have softened, as Burrage suggests, then one has simply to produce the list of Powell's consistently Calvinistic writings of that period. For example, there is his Tsippor Bappach of 1661, which he wrote to his Welsh churches after the Restoration, the Epistle Dedicatory of which alone contains a comprehensive summary of highly Calvinistic doctrine.⁴

If from the theology of the Confession the authorship of Powell be rejected, likewise from other internal evidence the authorship of

1. Religious Developments in Wales, 1654-62, pp. 257-258.

2. In the British Museum, folios 219-232.

3. "Early Welsh Baptist Doctrines. Set forth in a Manuscript ascribed to Vavasour Powell," in Transactions Baptist Hist. Soc., Vol.1, (1908-09), pp. 3-20.

4. Richards, History of the Puritan Movement in Wales, p. 176. Vid. also concerning Powell's later position, The life and death of Mr. Vavasour Powell (1671).

Ives or Lamb might be at least doubted. Ives and Lamb were by 1656 able controversialists, and their writings both before and after that date have a polish and a facility of expression which contrast quite sharply with the language of the Confession.^{1.} The author of the Confession must have been a man of less learning than they, as his spelling, punctuation, and sentence-structure clearly show. It must appear better, then, to name Hugh Evans or one of his helpers as the author of the Confession; and it seems wise to assign the Confession to an earlier date than 1656 for several reasons. First, the Quakers arrived in Wales in 1653,^{2.} and soon began systematically to attack the Baptist churches, giving special attention to, and getting in their most effective work on those of Arminian theology. John ap John, perhaps the first Quaker convert in Wales, was itinerating before 1655 from his home near Wrexham in the North as far as Glamorganshire in the South.^{3.} Peter Price of Radnorshire and Walter Jenkins of Monmouthshire were samples of his converts in 1655.^{4.} Holmes reported to George Fox in 1654 or 1655 that in Wales "the Peopell called babtis" were coming to the Quaker position in great numbers.^{5.} Whole groups of General Baptists became Quakers; the life of the churches in Wales was in great danger; indeed, before the Quaker tide lost its impetus, the whole Welsh General Baptist cause was practically overwhelmed. If the General Baptist Confession had been prepared as early as 1655, Quaker doctrines would almost certainly have been refuted in it. But from the Confession there is no sign that there was a Quaker in all Wales! We know that Hugh Evans did oppose the Quakers. John Moone in 1657, in his work, The True

1. The writings of Powell, an Oxford graduate, contrast, of course, even more sharply with this document.

2. Vid. An Antidote Against the Infection of the Times, Preface.

3. "The First Publishers of Truth," p. 321, and p. 323.

4. Ibid., p. 322 and fn.

5. Richards, Religious Developments in Wales, p. 259.

Light Hath Made Manifest Darknesse..., spoke of his opposition in two particulars: he said "the true Light shineth but in some and not in all," and "Christ and his spirit were distinct." But Evans died in 1655.

The strongest argument for an early date for the Confession comes from the last paragraph of the Confession itself, where there is a refutation of the "common prayer booke" and a plea to come out of the Establishment. Later there were far more pressing foes for Welsh General Baptists than the Church of England. The Confession thus appears to have been drawn up before 1654 by Hugh Evans or some other early General Baptist leader, in response to a direct need and a direct call from his young churches. The Puritan and Baptist groups on all sides were Calvinistic, and a well reasoned written statement of the General Baptist position was needed both for the enlightenment of General Baptists and for the conversion to their views of those who differed from them. It is not known that the Confession was ever published by the Welsh General Baptists. It is important to note, however, that it was prepared in the name of "the Church of Christ in wales, falsely caled Anabaptists," and that those whom it represented had "formerly been led" in "that doctrine which is commonly^{1.} preached" (Calvinism), but now stood in strong opposition to it. This last fact does not necessarily mean the people had been Particular Baptists; they had rather been Calvinistic Puritans.

It is evident that the author of the Welsh Confession had no

1. All quotations from this Confession are taken from the copy edited by Champlin Burrage under "Early Welsh Baptist Doctrines. Set forth in a Manuscript ascribed to Vavasor Powell," in Transactions Baptist Hist. Soc., Vol.1 (1908-09), pp. 3-20.

model by which to draw up his document; he simply followed his own line of thought. Did he know anything of the Confession of 1651 of his Midland brethren? Apparently not, for while that Confession shows, by its inclusion of the Welsh in its address, that English General Baptists knew there were General Baptists in Wales, even the mother of the Welsh churches, Coventry, had no interest in the Confession. Why Coventry was not represented at the 1651 meeting is not known.

3. Contents of the Confession

A. The Introduction

In the brief introduction to the Welsh Confession the author sounded a typical General Baptist note when he said that "it is the duty of those who have found truth Not to hide it vnder a Bushell, but to publish and declare it for the good, and edification of others, truth never fears the triall...."

B. Theological Outlook

The Confession itself does not pretend to be a complete doctrinal summary. Rather, it is concerned with the two doctrines by which General Baptists were most clearly distinguished from their neighbors, and from which they got their name: a general atonement and believers' baptism. The numbering of the articles and of points under the articles is not always clear or accurate, but five articles are devoted to a full discussion of the extent of Christ's death, and the final article is reserved for the question of baptism. The author was not content with offering propositions representative of General Baptist belief, but he went on to state reasons for holding these propositions and to answer objections which might possibly be raised against them.

The first Article declares that Christ, the second Adam, graciously gave Himself "a Ransome to God for all menne." The proposition is expanded as the author reasons that since Christ tasted death for every man, and is become a propitiation for the sins of the world, the guilt and condemnation of Adam's sin have been taken away, "and none are guiltie of sin, vntill they com to act sin; by breaking the lawes of God in their owne person...." That Christ died for the elect only (as "the elect" is usually understood) could not be true because under no circumstances could "elect" be used as a synonym for "world" in John 3:16. To do that would mean to believe there are two kinds of "elect," some who may perish and some who are saved: "a distinction (I suppose) unknowne in divinitie."

Article 2 declares that Christ by His death took away the curse of the Law for all, and offers three reasons for holding that. Article 3, likewise, says' that Christ by his resurrection purchased everlasting life for all who do not reject it through unbelief and disobedience. The reasons for holding this view are worth noting:

1. The Gospel is to be preached to all men.
2. God commands all to believe the Gospel.
3. God would have all men saved.
4. Man's damnation is of himself.
5. God is no respecter of persons.
6. God is said to wait upon men.

Articles 4 and 5 concern Election and Reprobation, respectively. Election is dealt with by means of the statement that none are elected while they continue in unbelief and disobedience, but upon putting on Christ by believing. An effort is made to prove this by contrasting the state of one absolutely elected and the state of a believer.

Reprobation is defined as "the purpose of God before time to reiect such as would reiect him in time." Reasons for dissenting from absolute reprobation are listed and, following them, reasons for holding to the Arminian definition of reprobation.

The author used every argument available to urge his view of the extent of Christ's death, including reductio ad absurdum. He said that Christ, when He comes, will judge the world of sin,--

"Of what sin of Adams? Noe, but sin because they believe not on mee, now who would have such a thought, once to think that god will condemn men to hell-fire, for nnot believing that which was nothing soe, is this to attribute Righteousness to our maker? I trow not, for those that neuer had any portion in Christ neuer reiected any thing, and they doe not believe that god loued them or that Christ died for them, which if it bee soe that Christ died for them that believe the truth, and soe are condemned for believing the truth, oh the patience of god to sufer this!"

The concluding arguments are from the practical point of view. The doctrine of a limited atonement takes away all pity and charity toward others, opens the way to sin and licentiousness, and makes the New Covenant a vain thing.^{1.} The personality and voice of the preacher thunder through the first five Articles of the Confession, finding striking expression in interjections like, "oh that men were wise," "oh fearful," and in the statement that the doctrine of absolute election and reprobation

"not only makes god a liar but it makes him worse than the Diuill, for the diuill can but tempt, and alure to sin: but by that doc: god forceth man: (oh I tremble to think of it) to all sin and iniquitie and consequently to hell fire."

C. Baptism

The Article on "Baptisme with water" is divided into two parts:

1. Article 5.

a brief statement of the proper subjects for baptism and a more lengthy discussion of the improper use of the Ordinance, "which we had in our Infancie." The whole argument is clearly directed against Church of England practice. The "ordnance" ... "ought to be practiced on all those that doe belieue and discerne for what end it was ordained." Three arguments are advanced for rejecting the Ordinance "as it hath bene vsed in the Church of England." First, "by the mater itself," by which is meant:

1. It was not the New Testament practice or command.
2. It makes those who suppose themselves of the Church (and are not) to think highly of themselves without cause.
3. It makes the Church "consist of all sorts."

Second, "the maner." "Baptizo" and "Rantizo" are contrasted; samples of New Testament practice are given; and the conclusion is, "we know a man is neuer sayd to be buried when there is only a little dust cast vpon his forehead soe it apears plainly that he who is only sprinkled was neuer yet baptized." Third, "the end," which has been often misunderstood in that "the baptisme of infants was ordained to take away sins, as may be sen in the common prayer booke, but the blod of Christ cleanseth vs from all sins...."

D. The Concluding Argument

The conclusion of the whole argument of the Confession is "come out of her my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins" The author admitted that the Confession was "briefly and confusedly (by reason of hast)" prepared; but at least he succeeded in stating the doctrines under consideration in such a manner that they would be understood by his contemporary Welsh Baptists. In his Confession

we have the most elaborate statement of any Confession of the period on the two cardinal points of General Baptist teaching.

4.

The Confession was probably not published in Wales in the seventeenth century. No original copy of it other than the manuscript in the British Museum^{1.} is known. The British Baptist Historical Society published a facsimile copy of this in Transactions, Vol. 1 (in 1908).

1. Harl. 6898, ff. 219-232.

VII." An Antidote Against the Infection of the Times," 16561.

Probably the first Particular Baptist preaching heard in Wales was that of some members of the New Model Army. Royalist sentiment continued to be strong in the Principality following the first Civil War, and in 1648 Cromwell found it necessary to move a detachment against the Royalists at Pembroke. It was on this occasion that John Myles, an Oxford graduate, met some Particular Baptists and was converted to their views. Myles had begun to preach in Wales in 1644 or 1645, probably as an Independent.¹ He seems to have been visited, soon after his conversion to Baptist views, by William Consett and Edward Drapes of the Glass-house Church, London.² This event was followed in the spring of 1649 by his journeying to London, with his friend Thomas Proud, where he was baptized on profession of faith. The London Church gave him an enthusiastic welcome and recorded that his coming was an answer to prayer for home missionaries. The Church was in a healthy state, but of its number only Drapes was giving full time to missionary work; now here was an educated Welshman who could represent the Church in Wales.

After a fortnight's stay in London, during which time he became acquainted with the practices of the churches of which Kiffin, Knollys, Consett, and Heath were able leaders,³ he returned with the endorsement of the Glass-house Church to Gower and threw himself into his work. On October 1, 1659, he held his first baptismal service, and

1. Gordon, A., in Dictionary of National Biography, Vol. 39, p. 445.

2. Vid. "John Myles in Wales," in The Baptist Quarterly, Vol. 5 (1930-31), pp. 362-363.

3. Richards, The Puritan Movement in Wales, 1639-53, p. 202.

proceeded to found a church at Ilston, near Swansea in Glamorganshire.^{1.} Before January 12, 1650, another church had been founded at Llanharan, and in February, 1650, a church was constituted at Hay in Brecknockshire,^{2.} a point having Lollard traditions, and a convenient meeting place for Independents of Llanigon who had recently become Baptists and for other Baptists who had for some time been gathering on the other side of the mountains at Olchon in Herefordshire. In January, 1651, a church was "settled" at Caermarthen, and before July, in the same year, another appeared at Abergavenny.^{3.} Gordon thinks the five churches of the Myles group gathered by 1652 "did not all make adult baptism a term of communion, though Myles' own church did";^{4.} but this is to be doubted in view of the fact that Myles was working under the supervision of London churches which always insisted on both closed-membership and close-communion principles. It does seem probable, however, that some of the churches had originally been organized by Myles as Independent churches, and that he succeeded in leading them over to the Baptist position.

The early growth of the Welsh Particular Baptist cause is largely to be accounted for by the zeal and administrative ability of Myles, and by the strategic positions he came to occupy in Wales. In consequence of the Act of February 22, 1650, of the Rump Parliament, committees made up of seventy-one officers, esquires, and gentlemen, were appointed to deal with questions affecting the preaching of the Gospel

1. Richards, The Puritan Movement in Wales, pp. 362-363.

2. Barclay, op. cit., p. 19.

3. Richards, Puritan Developments in Wales, p. 202.

4. Dictionary of National Biography, Vol. 39, pp. 445-446.

in Wales. One of the duties of the seventy-one men was to appoint to vacant charges preachers who had been approved by a quorum of a committee of twenty-five ministers called Approvers. Myles was one of the Approvers. In that capacity he was able to enlist some promising ministers for the Baptist cause. Soon he was at the head of sixteen Baptist preachers,^{1.} among whom Walter Prosser and David Davis^{2.} were outstanding.

2.

When but three Particular Baptist churches had been organized in 1650, representatives of Hay and Llanafan met with the Church at Ilston 'to consult concerning such business as was then by God's assistance determined and expressed....'^{3.} We are not told who called this meeting, but Myles must have been responsible for it. When the representatives met again in about three months (January 19, 1651) at Caermarthen, the Church at that place took part in the deliberations. From that meeting the churches sent a letter to the Glass-house Church in London which was a report on their state and which contained a request for advice. An answer came back from London, advising that the churches divide into more particular congregations, but by mutual consent.^{4.} The Church at Abergavenny was probably formed in 1652 in consequence of this, and a General Meeting was held with the Abergavenny Church in 1653.

Meanwhile, Myles went in 1651 as the official representative of the Welsh Association to an important meeting of Particular Baptists in London.^{5.} In addition to the regular General Meetings, frequent

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1. Gordon, op. cit., p. 445.
 2. "John Myles in Wales," loc. cit.
 3. Thomas, op. cit., p. 5.
 4. Ibid.
 5. Gordon, op. cit., p. 445.

letters went from church to church. This group of Baptists, unlike the Welsh General Baptists, was never isolated. The Glass-house Church was ever solicitous of the welfare of these Welsh brethren, and each church, as well as the Association, was the recipient of letters of encouragement from London. By these letters the Welsh churches were also kept in touch with trends in Baptist life in the provinces and in Ireland. Moreover, the visit of Hanserd Knollys to Radnor and Brecon must have cheered the group.^{1.}

The organization which Myles developed in connection with his churches gave the General Meetings so close a supervision over them that the result appears, at times, to have approached presbyterianism. This development among these Baptist churches was resorted to in self-defense and represented an adaptation to the Welsh environment. It has not been proven that Myles took upon himself undue authority. His position is revealed in a record from 1654:

'It is our desire that the Church at Ilston do spare Brother Myles as often and as long as they may, to be among the churches of the Hay and Abergavenny, in order to the settling of them' 2.

By 1656 there were other groups of Particular Baptists in Wales, and they at least rivaled Myles' group in numbers and influence. Chief among these was the group led by Jenkin Jones which practiced open-communion. Another group of open-communion Baptists was led by William Thomas in Monmouthshire, and after 1655, when he became a Baptist, Vavasor Powell, greatest of the Propagators and father of Welsh itin-

1. Richards, History of the Puritan Movement in Wales, p. 202 f.
 2. Thomas, op. cit., pp. 10-11.

erants, began to gather numerous open-communion Particular Baptist churches. Myles' close-communion churches being thus confronted by the easier discipline of the Arminian Baptists on the one hand, and the easier views of their Particular Baptist neighbors on the other, had to make up for the absence of friendly neighbors by depth of conviction. To keep out disintegrating heresy, the adoption of a quasi-presbyterian system seemed the best thing. While the Myles group was not large, it contained some important people -- sheriffs, under-sheriffs, and several former Propagation Commissioners^{1.} -- and it meant to hold such as it had.

3.

When trouble did come to the Myles group it seems to have been both internal and external in origin. Richards speaks of the "close" Baptists' encasement in "a triple armour of aggressive Calvinism,^{2.} strict communion, and the skill of a consummate dialectician," but even this armor did not resolve the issues in dispute among this people concerning state-pay for ministers nor dispel the ever-aggressive Quakers. The first part of the trouble was aggravated by Myles himself. When the Propagation Act for Wales expired it was decided to try on England the same system of organization which had proven itself in Wales. Myles was willing to go on acting as part of the larger machine as he had done in the plan in Wales. The Quakers cried out against the whole system, saying it hindered the workings of the Spirit. They shortly had greater cause for crying out, for Myles consented to take the office of lecturer at Llanelly, receiving for

1. Richards, Religious Developments in Wales, pp. 262-264.

2. Ibid.

that an additional salary of forty pounds from the tithes. By this time he had to face not only the Quakers but many of his own people, among whom the principle of refusing state-pay had been more popularly grasped with the passing months. In July, 1655, one whole section of the Myles group, that at Abergavenny, declared against a subsidized ministry in a famous resolution.^{1.} Thomas Holmes, whom Emmott calls "the apostle of Welsh Quakerism," had visited that town early that year, being assisted in his labors by his wife and Alice Birkett of Kendal, and it may be that Baptist opinion was crystallized on the subject of state-pay by that visit.^{2.}

Myles thought he could deal with his own people, but special attention had to be given to troubles from without. The Quakers were playing havoc with the many scattered bands of recently-converted and unsettled Baptists in South Wales, and they were circulating provocative and hurtful papers against the Baptists in Radnorshire, Llanafan, and Montgomeryshire.^{3.} Myles decided to prepare a direct refutation of Quakerism which would at the same time be a Confession of Faith for his churches. Concerning this document he would seek the approval of his brethren at a meeting to be held at Brecknock on May 29-30, 1656. When that date arrived, however, Myles found that dealing with even some of his own people was not going to be easy; about half the delegates whom he had summoned to Brecknock did not obey his summons. Probably he knew in advance that the delegates would not attend, for, in order to have an assembly large enough to give weight

1. Richards, Religious Developments in Wales, pp. 252-254.

2. A Short History of Quakerism, p. 149.

3. Thomas, op. cit., p. 17.

to his declaration, he seems to have called to his aid the Baptists of Hereford and Bradwardine (his home district), who, however, must not have been in unanimous agreement with him on the question of close-^{1.} communion. This was probably not a regular meeting of the Welsh Association. The Confession which was put forth was aimed both at setting straight the disaffected brethren and at the root of the main difficulties of all the Particular Baptist group, the Quakers. The singular persistency with which the Quakers aimed their propaganda at all kinds of Baptists could not be longer ignored, nor could the success of that propaganda campaign be overlooked. The Baptist answer was "Published by the appointment of the Elders and messengers of the severall churches of Ilston, Abergavenny, Tredinog, Carmarthen, Hereford, Bredwardine, Cledock, and Llangors, meeting at Brecknock...."

4.

The form which the Confession took was so unique that there has been some hesitancy about calling it a confession. Isaac Backus, seventeenth century American historian, reported that the churches of Myles and others published a confession of their faith, "wherein they adopted the words of David in Psalm 51.5," and which was publicly opposed by George Fox.^{2.} Joshua Thomas, noting Backus, says, "A sight of that confession of faith would be very gratifying; but the Brecknock tract is a good evidence of the orthodoxy of our brethren in those early days."^{3.} It is now clear that An Antidote... was that confession, George Fox in his reply to it having based his first

1. Richards, Religious Developments in Wales, pp. 263-264.

2. History of New England, Vol.1, p. 460.

3. History of the Baptist Association in Wales, p. 17.

objection ~~on~~^{1.} a Particular Baptist principle which was supported by Psalm 51:1. The General Meeting of the Welsh Baptist Association issued An Antidote... as an official defense of the faith of the group; it did not represent only the views of John Myles.

5.

The Confession may well be studied under three heads.

A. Structure and Theological Outlook

The originality of structure of the Confession must be traced to the peculiar genius of John Myles; and both the symmetry of thought and the force of expression of the Confession do great credit to the abilities of its author. The Confession itself is divided into three sections, the first being addressed to Sinners, the second to Saints, and the third to Backsliders. The fact that in the third section, called "Invitations to Backsliders," has been included earnest appeals to return to the Baptist fellowship points to the progress Quakers had already made amid this group. In the other two sections there are repeated references to the errors of the Quakers, though there is but one reference to the Quakers by name. In the introductory statement, "To the Reader," the author, by the use of military metaphors, pictures the state of "Syon" as that of a besieged city, and speaks out against those who obviously were making a frontal attack and against those false accusers who were attacking privily, saying that "the true servants of God" were "the alone promoters of Seekers, Quakers, Familists, yea, and profest Infidels...." In the case of the last-named opponents, the author had in mind Richard Baxter

1. An Antidote..., p. 53.

and his recent work, Epistle to the Anabaptists and Separatists in
England.^{1.}

Section I contains nine clearly stated "Considerations presented to Sinners." This section is intentionally more theological than the other two. It begins with a statement of the conviction that there is no degree of inherent or habitual righteousness in any man, "by reason of Adam's sin." This assertion is balanced by the second Consideration, that God has sent forth a deliverer. Other Considerations concern the Resurrection of Christ, the Ascension, the Ends of the Ascension, and the Second Advent of Christ. The eschatology is well developed, and every point is supported by Scripture references. There is a vigorous defense of angelology under the fourth Consideration. The strongest Calvinism in the Confession finds expression in the ninth Consideration: "That it is by an effectual calling alone you may come to enjoy true light and salvation." But the obtaining of light and salvation is said to involve the individual's careful use of means appointed by God thereto, namely the Scriptures and Ministers of the Gospel. There is no statement concerning Perseverance; indeed, from the introduction to the Confession where the author speaks of Satan's threatening to remove the lively stones from the walls of Zion, it would appear that the group did not hold the doctrine. George Fox, in his reply to An Antidote..., did not fail to take note of this and to object: "Is this like that the Elect should be deceived? living stones should be drawn from the sure fountain, the rock of Ages, the Lord Jesus Christ? ... this doctrine doth not sound like men of

1. Vid. An Antidote..., p. A 2.

understanding....¹ Perhaps Myles had let his metaphors say too much; but why did he not include an article on Perseverance? It did not fit his purpose to do so, for it would not help his argument under "Considerations to Sinners," nor under "Admonitions to Saints," and certainly not under "Invitations to Backsliders." The intent of the Confession was such that a statement of the doctrine of Perseverance would hinder rather than help; and the Baptists could hold the doctrine without stating it here. The same may be said of the doctrine of Predestination. Nothing was allowed to interfere with the practical purposes of evangelizing sinners, admonishing saints, and pleading with backsliders. Nowhere does the evangelistic zeal of both leader and people show itself more clearly than in the concluding plea to sinners:

"Remember that he (God) hath been long calling on you; that the time past is enough to serve the world, flesh, and Satan, together with the danger of not harkening to him; the certainty of death, and after that the judgment; as also the blessed privileges and benefits that come by receiving him; and speedily, humbly, and boldly come to him whose arms are spread, and heart is open to receive you." 2.

The second section, containing admonitions to Saints, was occasioned said the author, "by the manifest dangers that you are in, by reason of the sundry spreading errors, and perilous temptations of these times," and by the desire

"to warn you against the spirit of delusion and apostasie, which is come abroad; and to establish in the truth such among you, as are ready to be tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine or temptation...." 3.

1. An Antidote..., p. 53.

2. Ibid., p. 17.

3. Ibid., p. 18.

The section is concerned with five "reigning corruptions" of the day: Spiritual Pride, Hypocrisy, Contempt of Magistracy, Worldly-mindedness, and Decay of Love. The third section, concerning backsliders, addresses them as "Miserable creatures"; but that others than those who had gone over to the Quakers were included is shown in the identifying of all who are out of the way in heart, in conversation, in judgment, or in doctrine with the name backsliders. However, the case of those who were most backslidden in judgment and doctrine was most dangerous, being most abhorred of God.¹ Seven strong motives for the return of the backslider to the ways of God are named. The concluding sentence of this section is a convincing sample of the sincerity and yearning of the author:

"Believe it, thy Father and his holy angels are ready to welcome thee, and would rejoyce at thy return; the Saints, whose hearts thou hast often wounded, are upon their knees daily for thee, and long to see that happy day of thy recovery from the snare of the Devil, wherein thou art captive at his will; delay not therefore, poor miserable creature, to forsake every false way, and to return to the Lord thy God, who is ready to receive thee into his grace and glory." 2.

B. Conformity with London Particular Baptist Faith and Practice

Were these Welsh Baptists in conformity with Particular Baptists in London as regards faith and practice? This Confession indicates that they were in most respects, but not in all. The Scriptures are given a very high place in the Confession, and they are discussed at greater length than in any other Baptist Confession. Most Baptists of the period defended a literal interpretation of the Scriptures, but not all of them would say with this Confession that the Scriptures were "delivered by the immediate hand of God himself, as the Law upon

1. An Antidote..., pp. 40-41.

2. Ibid., p. 51.

Mount Horeb was written by his own finger."^{1.} In accounting for the strength of this statement Quaker teachings must be considered as of greatest importance. The views of the Confession on Baptism and the Lord's Supper are like those of other Baptists (though there is no definition of the meaning of the Supper), but three other "Ordinances of the Lord Jesus" are set alongside them: Preaching of the Gospel,^{2.} Church fellowship and censures, and Ministry. There is in the Confession no definition of the Church, but an unusual importance is attached to the eldership of the churches. The Apostles and the Primitive Churches are said to have chosen and ordained Elders, and "ordinary Ministers were called, as Timothy, Titus...."^{3.} From that usage, says the Confession, Ministers are elected by the people, and ordained by Elders.^{4.} Ministers are described as "God's Embassadors."^{5.} Freer use of censures for sin is prescribed than was warranted by Article 47 of the 1644 Confession, but Matthew 18:15-20, Acts 2:41-42, and "most of the Epistles," are quoted as authority.^{6.} No Baptists could have held preaching in higher regard than did the Myles group. On state-pay for preachers, however, that portion of the group which spoke through the Confession represented a small minority-opinion. An Antidote... commends the "lawful maintenance, which God the wise disposer of all things hath ordained for them," and declares that were it not that the Quakers "envy their work more than ~~their persons,~~ they would not chuse but confess that their double pains and travels night

1. An Antidote..., p. 14.

2. Ibid., pp. 22-23.

3. Ibid., p. 15.

4. Ibid., p. 23.

5. Ibid., p. 15.

6. Ibid., p. 23.

and day, deserves double honour, and an honourable maintenance."^{1.}
 It might be noted here that Myles had, earlier in the year, thanked Cromwell for the continuance of the public pay system.^{2.} The Propagation Act (for Wales) "much envied and too short-lived,"^{3.} is eulogized by the Confession in the highest terms; and recognition is given to "godly men, who have shewn themselves nursing Fathers unto us."^{4.} The political views of these Welsh Baptists are seen to have concurred with those of London Baptists in that the overthrow of the monarchy is described as "to the praise of the Lord,"^{5.} and a plea for a sympathetic attitude toward the present powers is set forth.^{6.}

The group was not speaking of Quakers but of some people in their own fellowship when it declared in favor of "that latitude" of conscience "which in such cases God hath given, even that every man should be fully persuaded in his own mind."^{7.} The "cases" under consideration concerned "such things as are left to Christian prudence," there being no "Scripture-rule" for them, and on which the brethren should be able to disagree without producing divisions. Some of these were mentioned: the present government of the nation and ministers' maintenance;^{8.} others, the keeping of feast days, the number of officers in a church, the laying on of hands, had occasioned not a little trouble.^{9.} The group followed the lead of the London brethren of the period in allowing for individual differences of opinion on such matters

1. An Antidote..., p. 25.

2. "John Myles in Wales," loc. cit.

3. An Antidote..., p. 16.

4. Ibid., p. 32.

5. Ibid., p. 37.

6. Ibid., p. 31.

7. Ibid., p. 37.

8. Ibid., p. 27. Most Baptists, like the Quakers, opposed ministers' maintenance (by tithes or State assistance) on principle.

9. Vid. Richards, The Puritan Movement in Wales, p. 202.

C. Light on Quaker Doctrine and Practice

The Confession is quite as revealing of Quaker doctrine and practice in the period as of Baptist thought and usage. In the first section "Sinners" are warned against accepting "half a Christ" whom some will offer, and the Scriptures and Ministry are emphasized as over against the neglect of them by some. It is in the second section, however, that "Saints" are called to see the errors of the Quakers in all their reality. The Quakers undervalue the Scriptures;^{1.} they slight all the Ordinances of Christ;^{2.} they assert a glorious dispensation of light within men, making them holy and without stain of sin;^{3.} they vilify the ministers of Christ;^{4.} they "set their posts by God's posts," making their own laws;^{5.} they refuse to confess evident error;^{6.} and they "build upon the sandy or rather airy foundation of men's wandering fancies."^{7.}

6.

The Baptists under Myles did not underestimate the immediate danger of the Quaker surge: their own dissolution was threatened. The Quakers, on the other hand, did not underestimate the defensive worth of An Antidote to the Baptists. Even their great leader, George Fox, saw that if the Quakers were to make any headway with the dissidents in this group, this Confession, as a bond of union and as a defender of their beliefs, must be dealt with. Therefore, Fox prepared a reply to it which he called The Great Mystery of the Great

1. An Antidote..., p. 21.
2. Ibid., pp. 22-23.
3. Ibid., pp. 6, 19, 20, 25.
4. Ibid., pp. 24-25.
5. Ibid., p. 28.
6. Ibid., pp. 23-24.
7. Ibid., p. 30.

Whore pinfolded and Antichrist's Kingdome Revealed...." In this work he listed fourteen answers to propositions of An Antidote, and his harshly critical spirit is much in evidence. His concluding words are:

"... and as for all the rest of the lies in the book, we let them go home again upon their own heads, and every word shall be their own burthen, and that in your conscience shall witness; and the scriptures are owned by the Quakers, and denied by you, but owned for your own ends that deny the light." 1.

This reply did not appear until 1659, however, and by that time An Antidote, along with the unimpaired organizing genius of Myles, had gone a long way toward saving the "close" Particular Baptist cause in Wales. Other Baptist groups there were not so fortunate. The paralysing inroads of the Quakers on the Arminian group have been noted. The early gains of Jenkin Jones and his "open" Particular Baptist group were in many places dissipated as groups of Quakers "grew up in his footsteps."² Worse still, the numerous churches of "open" Particular Baptists who looked to Vavasor Powell for leadership were "peculiarly susceptible to the new attack."³ Powell spent much of his energy showing offence, after the damage had been done, by railing against numbers of his old disciples who had gone over to the Quakers. Myles had seen the storm coming his way and had prepared for it. If his unique Confession would not please all Baptists, at least it was capable of serving as a rallying-point for a hard pressed people.

7.

Copies of An Antidote being very scarce, the Welsh Baptist Historical Society published the work (edited by T. Shankland) in 1904

1. Vid. An Antidote, Appendix, pp. 53-56.

2. Richards, Religious Developments in Wales, pp. 261-262.

3. Ibid., pp. 264-265.

at Cardiff. The reply of George Fox to An Antidote was included as an appendix. In the Historical Society edition the Confession is fifty-one pages in length, and the appendix is four pages long. Original copies of the Confession are to be found only in the British Museum and in the Angus Library, Regent's Park College, Oxford.^{1.}

1. Whitley, A Baptist Bibliography, p. 63.

CHAPTER IV

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CHAPTER IV.

THE STANDARD GENERAL BAPTIST CONFESSION, 1660

I. Backgrounds of the Confession

1.

The 1651 meeting of the General Baptists of the Midlands was but a step in the direction of the realization of a larger fellowship in the whole General Baptist body. Groups of churches in many parts of the country began to meet more often. One of these, meeting on New Year's Day, 1653, at Northampton, dared address a frank letter to Oliver Cromwell, bidding him to watch his ambition and to give himself to the task of redressing grievances.^{1.} Groups from the several sections exchanged letters and Messengers, and there was soon talk of a representative meeting of all General Baptists.

This increase in activity was directly reflective of the complete change of fortune which had come to the Baptists, and of the new political conditions in the country. A survey of events of the period 1653-1660, in relation to the Baptists, is necessary to an understanding of the forces which produced the well known "Standard" Confession of General Baptists in 1660. By 1653, as has been noted, most of the chief officers of the regular army were Baptists, and the militia was made up almost entirely of Baptists and Independents. In that year a "Nominated Parliament" sat, most of whose members were from the same groups. The reforms in government to which this Parliament addressed itself were indeed drastic. A Council of State was appointed; the registration of marriages by justices of the peace was arranged; the abolition of tithes was proposed, and so

1. "Chowns - Christians and Citizens," in The Baptist Quarterly, Vol. 1 (1922-23), p. 145.

discontinuation of state-pay for ministers; and steps were taken in the direction of abolishing Chancery.^{1.} Some of the Parliament's actions proved too drastic for the more conservative members, and they surrendered their powers, so that the end came for the whole body in December. Cromwell actually dissolved the Parliament by force, and assumed charge of the government.

In 1651 an Instrument of Government was drawn up by officers of the Army, and in 1653 Cromwell was with great magnificence declared Lord Protector. To all of these events Baptists gave the closest attention. The many republicans among both sections of Baptists considered his willingness to accept the Protectorship a clear sign of treachery on the part of Cromwell. They feared the restoration of monarchy under a Lord Protector. Some Baptists felt the very use of the title of Protector by Cromwell was an impiety, while others were sure the court ceremonial was unbecoming, and that those steps which Cromwell early took toward the regulation of the ministry were utterly wrong.^{2.} The small group of millenial enthusiasts, called Fifth-Monarchy Men, shouted that Cromwell was obstructing the early setting-up of the last world-monarchy, which would be Christ's Kingdom in England and the world, and so they turned with all their souls against him. Cromwell was not ignorant of the feelings of the dissidents, and after 1654 he began a systematic weeding of them from the Army. Thus he would undermine their strength. While the beginning of Cromwell's break with some Baptists and republicans may be dated from 1654, there is no indication that the freedom of the

1. Whitley, Minutes of the General Assembly, Vol. 1, p. 1.
 2. Brown, L. Baptists and Fifth-Monarchy Men, pp. 55-56.

Baptists as a group was impaired.

It is not surprising, however, that when the General Assembly of General Baptist churches from several parts of the nation met in London in 1654 to consider denominational business, it also concerned itself with national affairs, and issued a manifesto disavowing sympathy with the Fifth-Monarchy movement and declaring the willingness of its members to assist in civil affairs and to support all measures of the new government which did not infringe on conscience. The stated purpose of the meeting was 'to consider how and which way the affairs of the Gospell of Christ, so farre as it concerns them, might be best promoted....'^{1.} This meeting was probably the first General Assembly of General Baptists, though Whitley^{2.} suggests there may have been an unrecorded similar meeting the previous year. Thirteen Messengers and twelve Elders signed the manifesto of 1654 which they called,

"The Humble Representation and Vindication of many of the Messengers, Elders, and Brethren ... of and concerning their Opinions and Resolutions touching the Civill Government of these Nations, and of their Deportment under the same."

It is the earliest known statement of the General Assembly.

The great majority of Baptists, while admitting that the Protectorate was not the ideal government, congratulated themselves on the benefits which it afforded. One group of churches in Northumberland, Yorkshire, and Derbyshire disowned any part in the agitations against the government, rejoiced (in a "Representation and Petition") in "the Saints Magna Charta, for the government of the Commonwealth"

1. Whitley, History of British Baptists, p. 92.

2. Whitley, Minutes of the General Assembly, p. 2.

(i.e., the Instrument of Government), and were thankful for the "halcyon daies of peace, plenty, and liberty."^{1.}

None the less, when the General Assembly met again, in 1656, in London, political affairs were the talk of the day. More Baptists were now disappointed at the little progress toward reform which Cromwell was making. For example, the report had been current that Cromwell had promised Henry Jessey, the London pastor, that tithes would be taken away by September 3, 1654, but they had not been.^{2.} Then, in 1656, Parliament adopted the proposal that the monarchy be restored, and offered the kingship to the Protector. This step raised an uproar, especially from Baptists. As if the crumpling of their favorite Constitution had not been enough, this offer seemed to tread underfoot their last republican principle. Active opposition to Cromwell by numbers of Baptists who heretofore had cautioned patience can be dated from the proposal that monarchical forms be again adopted. Even the forms of monarchy were distasteful to this people, who were ever preaching simplicity of dress and manner. More than that, the restoration of monarchy suggested to their minds the loss of those gains which they had helped make in the Civil Wars. Indeed, it cannot be doubted that the greatest opposition of all to the project of making Cromwell king came from the Baptists.^{3.} Eighteen Baptist ministers of London besought Cromwell in a petition to refuse the title.^{4.} More important was the opposition among Bap-

1. Whitley, History of British Baptists, p. 92.

2. Brown, l.op. cit., pp. 119-120.

3. Brown, l.op. cit., p. 119.

4. John Goodwin, Independent leader, also signed this petition.

tists in the Army. "It would not be far from the truth to say that in every Baptist soldier there was an opponent of monarchy...^{1.}"; and Baptists were to the fore in the Army. Cromwell, unwilling to face the possible defection of his Army, refused the crown.

At the General Baptist Assembly of July, 1656, the majority opinion was that patience still should be urged. That body declared that

'The Church ought to behave herself to the present powers in all humility to do as they command or suffer as they inflict in matters pertaining to men, willing to obey, and in things concerning worship, if it be by them considered contrary to God's word to suffer meekly.' 2.

Outside the Assembly many Baptists were convinced that humility was not the best attitude to take toward the political situation.

The address of the London ministers was the first Baptist protest to Cromwell which seemed to bear an official stamp; and from the period of this address can be traced a marked change in attitude toward the Baptists on the part of Cromwell. If theretofore the Protector had moved to weed objectionable Baptists out of the Army, it had been done very quietly; now his opposition to the entire Baptist political power became evident. Certainly the address was not the sole, or even a very important cause of this. Chiefly responsible for it were the unhappy experiences Cromwell had had with the impracticable projects of certain enthusiasts, some of whom were Baptists, and the growing conviction in his mind that the only way out of the religious confusion of the day was a State-Church arrangement along Presbyterian lines. The Protector knew how the Baptists would

1. Brown, loc. cit., pp. 123-125.

2. Whitley, Minutes of the General Assembly, p. 6.

react to State-Presbyterianism. At the same time, he could secure essential Presbyterian support by dealing strongly with Baptist and Independent extremists.

By 1656 Baptists were looking more and more like a formidable political unit. From Cromwell's point of view, the most dangerous aspect of the situation lay in the fact that the Fifth-Monarchists were making a determined bid for Baptist support, and for the first time it appeared^{1.} that their efforts in this direction might be successful. Previously only individual Baptists had supported the Fifth-Monarchy cause; the only church which had gone over as a unit^{2.} to it was that of the visionary London physician, Peter Chamberlen. Baptist churches had indeed served the movement as a recruiting ground, but a general shift toward the Fifth-Monarchy side on the part of a large section of the Baptist fellowship would be a far more dangerous thing. Some leading Baptists met to consider the Fifth-Monarchy offers of affiliation, and the meeting was not long a secret.^{3.} Cromwell also saw that the more moderate wing of the Fifth-Monarchists was threatened with loss of control of the movement to its aggressive counterpart. From its appearance the party had shown two tendencies, one toward the idea that the attempt to remove the government of Cromwell should be only by means of the prayers of the saints, the other toward the establishment by the sword of the rule of the saints. The latter was represented in 1656 by a small but very determined group. However, Fifth-Monarchy efforts to form

1. Brown, Lop. cit., pp. 202-203.

2. Ibid., p. 59.

3. Ibid.

a coalition of Baptists, Independents, and republicans in electing a large representation to the Parliament, which Cromwell was forced to call in 1655, failed. After that, most "sectaries" began to pin their hopes on the Army; outvoted in the House, they had no other alternative. Still, it must not be supposed that Baptist churches, as organizations, ever took important public action against the Protectorate of Oliver Cromwell.^{1.}

With the death of Oliver Cromwell, it seemed to some Baptists that an advance beyond the Protectorate might safely be ventured. The power of the Army was growing apace, and that fact seemed to allay fear of anything like anarchy in the event of a sudden change. On February 8, 1659, therefore, William Kiffin and some other Baptist leaders whose record of faithfulness to the Commonwealth commended them, appeared in the House with a petition. Before it was actually presented, by the wealthy Baptist merchant, Samuel Moyer, Richard Cromwell had been recognized as Protector and general of the armies of the Commonwealth. The petition was regarded as an application for the establishment of a republic; but the House concerned itself only with certain particular grievances contained therein and promised, with due politeness, to give attention to them.^{2.}

Richard Cromwell appeared to favor many of the precedents of his father with regard to the liberties of the sectaries, but his Parliament soon showed little intention of following his policies. Baptists thought the impasse presented an opportunity which could

1. Vid. discussion on this point in Brown, op. cit., pp. 202-203.
 2. Brown, op. cit., pp. 173-174.

not be wasted, so they turned to the Army. How instrumental they were in effecting the change in government, which came less than eight months after Oliver Cromwell's death, it is difficult to say, but they did see in the overthrow of the Protectorate a necessary step toward securing a desirable kind of Commonwealth, and they were very active in the effort. It was the conviction of many of the soldiers that they were following the champion of independence and religious freedom against an opposing regime when they obeyed Fleetwood rather than the Protector. Richard Cromwell was thus forced, in April, 1659, to put himself into the hands of the Army, and to dissolve his Parliament.

1.

A Council of Officers, including five Baptists, now took over practical control of the government. The new order (including the Long Parliament which was soon restored) was welcomed with enthusiasm by Baptists in many quarters. General Baptists of sixteen counties, meeting at Aylesbury, registered hearty approval, and suggested the establishment of a true Commonwealth. Particular Baptists in Kent sent their congratulations, and referred to the desirability of abolishing tithes.

2.

As the supporters of Richard Cromwell speedily left the Army their places were taken by men who had suffered under the Protectorate. Among these the following Baptists were given commissions: Overton, Rich, Alured, Okey, Packer, Saunders, Gladman, Streeter, Richard Lawrence, John Mason, Spencer, Brayfield, Axtell, Allen, Vernon, Lawson, Cooper, Barrow, Wigan, Goodgroom, and Sankey.

3.

1. Brown, l.op. cit., pp. 176-177.

2. Ibid., pp. 179-180.

3. Ibid., pp. 185-186.

Probably all of these were Particular Baptists, but their opponents were not careful of what kind of Baptists they were, so long as their intentions were suspect. With the coming of rumors of royalist activity in the North and of Presbyterian sympathy with the Royalists, there was, moreover, a rush of sectaries to join the militia. Consequently there was much talk of what the "Anabaptists" in the Army were about to do. Royalists and others were also alarmed at the renewed activities of the Fifth-Monarchists. The old stories of the Munster Anabaptists were revived, and new editions of scurrilous writings against the Baptists were published. Opponents of the Baptists were everywhere saying the group was on the point of issuing a general appeal to arms.^{1.} That was far from the truth for Baptists feared civil strife as much as did any political group. Both sections of Baptists, and Baptists from all parts of the country, had repeatedly affirmed their loyalty to the Protectorate. That government was not what they wanted, but they did not mean to remove it until there was sure prospect of something better. It was when the prevailing discontent in the country gave rise to talk of reestablishing the monarchy that the Baptists were forced into active political opposition. The monarchy still represented to them the denial of their most cherished principles, and they meant to prevent its return if possible. Meanwhile, there was abroad a strong general impression that Baptists had, at least, been instrumental in Richard Cromwell's downfall; and this impression was magnified by the circulation of dangerous rumors concerning the intentions of the Baptists.

1. Brown, l,op. cit., pp. 194-195.

These rumors called for immediate and specific denial.

London Particular Baptists, evidently with the help of some Independents, led the way in 1659 with the mollifying A Declaration of Several of the People called Anabaptists in and about the City of London. From this Declaration (and also that of a London General Baptist group which will be seen later) we learn in some detail the offenses being laid at the door of the Baptists. They included the following:

1. Opposition to magistracy.
2. Desiring to destroy the public ministry of the nation.
3. Countenancing the Quakers in their irregular practices.
4. Endeavoring "a toleration of all miscarriages in things ecclesiastical and civil, under pretense of Liberty of Conscience."
5. Desiring to "murder and destroy" those who differ from Baptists in matters of religion.

These Baptists (whose names are not given) attempted to answer each specific charge. They began by saying that, while they could not justify all the acts of each individual Baptist, their intention was "to be obedient to Magistracy in all things Civill, and willing to live peaceably, under whatever government is, and shall be established in this nation." The answers to two other accusations are of special importance. To the third, they reported that,

"... it is well known to all ... there are none more opposite to their [the Quakers'] irregular practices than we are: nor are there any, that they have exprest more Contradiction to, (in matters of Religion) than against us; though their provocation therein, hath not put us (in the least) on a desire, of depriving them of their just Liberty"

Concerning the fifth accusation, they said, "... we are not against tolerating of Episcopacy, Presbytery, or any stinted form, provided

they do not compel any others to a compliance therewith, or a conformity thereunto...."; but they declared against tolerating Popery, because of its bloody record, or those who worship false gods, or those who speak contemptuously of Christ, or those who deny the Scriptures to be the Word of God! They closed with the earnest plea:

"We hope, hereby, it will appear to them that fear God, that we are no such persons as our Adversaries have represented us. And for their incensing the rude multitude against us, it is no more, than some others did to our Master."

This Declaration brought prompt cries from several groups of General Baptists and from Burrough and Hubberthorn of the Quakers. William Rider, Southwark pastor, and thirteen others published in¹ December, 1659, a repudiation of the Particular Baptist answer. The Quakers complained, also in 1659, that the Declaration "doth rather seem a begging of pardon of the cavaliers than a vindication of the truth and cause once contended for." Then, early the next year, Adis, Pilgrim, and Cox published on behalf of their General Baptist Church, called the "Free-willers" Church, a Declaration in which they protested that the Baptist name was utterly contemned by the limitation of religious liberty proposed by the Particular group, and that the Particular Baptists did not speak for them when they² called Independents and Presbyterians "their Christian friends."

In January, 1660, appeared a more important statement from a larger group of General Baptists of London and vicinity. This Declaration, like that of the Adis group, objected to the Particular Baptist Declaration, and on two additional grounds:

1. Vid. Whitley, A Baptist Bibliography, p. 74.

2. Whitley, A Baptist Bibliography, pp. 74-75, supplies some facts concerning these Declarations of 1659-1660.

"... in their sewing pillows under the elbows of the ministers of the nation; and their want of boldness to witness against their Babylonish worship, which is also the reason we declare against those National ministers, more than against any other."¹.

The Declaration of the Adis group was accepted and praised, but it was said to be inadequate in that there was not in it "everything that was upon our hearts to declare." Twenty-eight names were signed to this last document, John Griffith's, ^hbe best known one, heading the list.

Griffith was pastor of the Dunning's Alley Church, as has been shown, and he had long been prominent in General Baptist circles. He had headed the group which put out the Confession of 1654, and his name had stood first among the Elders who signed the statements of the General Assembly in 1654 and 1655. It is to be noted, however, that Griffith did not sign the Confession of 1660; nor did any of the twenty-seven others who signed the London General Baptist Declaration early in that year. This fact is hardly without significance. It seems to point to a cleavage in the General Baptist fellowship which may have endangered the life of the young General Assembly. The Griffith company, possibly including the Churches of Rider and Adis, apparently belonged to a tradition which was different from that of the Church of Lamb and Barber (the original Church), and the Churches of Chillenden, of Gosnold, and of Ives. The first group opposed the bearing of arms and the taking of oaths;² the other

1. Barclay, op. cit., Chap. XX, Appendix, pp. ii-iii.

2. Vid. e.g., A Fanaticks testimony against swearing, Whitley, A Baptist Bibliography, p. 82. Griffith, Adis, and Pilgrim so strongly opposed the taking of oaths that by 1663 they were imprisoned for refusing to swear allegiense to the Crown (Whitley, supra., pp. 84, 85, and 87.)

Churches opposed neither.

Another subject on which the Griffith group took a dogmatic stand was the laying on of hands for all baptized believers. This practice had been discussed as early as 1644 by a certain Sarah Jones, probably a member of Peter Chamberlen's Church, but nothing is heard of it again until 1652. In that year William Rider led the members of John Clayton's Church at Dockhead (the Tookey Church of 1625) who desired Laying on of Hands in withdrawing and forming a new Church.^{1.} Griffith and his followers had taken up the practice of Laying on Hands by 1654, for in that year the Confession of the group contained an Article on the subject, and Griffith defended the practice in a pamphlet^{2.} in answer to Edward Harrison, the Particular Baptist. The attitude of the original Church toward the subject is not evident, though Samuel Oates, the outstanding itinerant of the Church, rejected the view of Griffith.^{3.} The fact that Lamb, the leading Elder, was in the Assembly in 1654 but did not sign the Confession of 1660 might indicate the stand of the Church. The name of Edward Barber, the other Elder, is also conspicuous by its absence from the 1660 Confession;^{4.} and clearly the Churches of Gosnold, Chillenden, and Ives opposed the Laying on of Hands and stood outside the Assembly.

New interest in the disputed doctrine in 1660, however, was connected with the announcement of a new symbol or official basis for the Griffith group. The symbol was announced in the title of

1. Whitley, The Baptists of London, pp. 103-110.

2. Laying on of hands on baptized believers, as such no counterfeit

3. Whitley, A Baptist Bibliography, pp. 49 and 53.

4. Crosby (History of English Baptists, Vol. 3, p. 3), however, reports Danvers and Edwards as saying that Barber's group was the first Baptist Church to practice Laying on of Hands. If that is true, perhaps the original Church met in two sections because of disagreement on the matter.

the Declaration of Griffith and twenty-seven others:

"A Declaration of some of those people in and near London, called Anabaptists, that own and believe that God's love in the death of his Son is extended to all men; and that are in the belief and practice of the doctrine of Christ, contained in Hebrews v.1,2 (sic)...." 1.

The Declaration itself first demands consideration. It was published to be "presented to the High Court of Parliament, and the people of this Commonwealth," and it demonstrates in its first sentence the serious position of the Baptists as well as the occasion for publishing:

"Whereas, the people of this nation called (though falsely) Anabaptists, are represented as the only men causing these sad and much-to-be lamented troubles, that hath lately happened in the Commonwealth; and as if they were such who would endeavor the setting up their own interest and religion by taking away the lives, and shedding the blood of others; yea, as if they were utter enemies to magistracy. These and such like calumnies, being by the tongues of the malicious, or ignorant, cast upon them, think it our duty, being as well as others concerned, to publish to the world our innocency therein...."

Following the introduction, there are nine points which summarize beliefs of the group regarding magistracy. Though expressed in greater fullness, the points are as follows:

1. Though represented as men thirsting for blood, we seek not the blood of any, no not of our worst enemies.
2. We own magistrates to be God's ministers, and to have power to use the sword.
3. We declare it our duty to submit to magistrates in all things; actively in the case of civil and lawful commands, passively in the case of commands relating to religion and contrary to conscience.
4. We believe it not our business to meddle with state affairs or the government of the Commonwealth unless called thereunto by the government.
5. We disown national ministers as not the ministers of Christ, and we protest against their sprinkling infants and their support by the State.

1. The correct Scripture reference is Hebrews vi.1,2. Printer's error here.

6. All should have liberty of conscience, and no magistrate has power over religion.
7. All (including ourselves) who break the laws of the nation ought to be punished, each according to the merit of his transgression.
8. We hold it to be sinful to maintain religion or any spiritual cause by means of the carnal sword.
9. We believe all earthly kingdoms belong by right to Christ and his saints; that Christ will one day possess them as the First and Last Monarchy upon earth; that meanwhile we are to wait as pilgrims and strangers, obeying the powers that are and not asserting Christ's authority over the carnal sword.

The "Doctrine of Christ," or the Six Principles of Heb vi:1-2, had, before 1659, become the doctrinal basis for the Griffith group of churches. There had long been among Baptists some interest in Hebrews vi:1-2. As early as 1644 Christopher Blackwood, Particular Baptist leader and ex-clergyman, had spoken, in a work which was more concerned with other subjects, of "the six fundamental points" set forth in these verses.¹ His work was reprinted in 1653 under a new title,² and there was soon widespread discussion of the Six Points. The military General Baptist Church of Chillenden and D'Anvers was inquiring, in the same year, of some other General Baptists concerning a point of "the foundation doctrine of Christ."³ By 1655 John Griffith was fully convinced concerning the authority of Hebrews vi:1-2, for in that year he published his book, God's oracle and Christ's doctrine, or the Six Principles of the Christian Religion. This work became the text-book of the Six Principle churches. In its introduction we see the peculiar viewpoint of the group: God gave Moses Ten Commandments for Israel, to be diligently and carefully kept,

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1. The Storming of Antichrist...
 2. A Soul-searching Catechism. Vid Whitley, A Baptist Bibliography, p. 52.
 3. Vid. Eight Questions in Reference to that Principle of the Foundation Doctrine of Christ, termed Laying on of Hands.

and God likewise carefully ordered the Ark and the Tabernacle.

"Now from this Form of Doctrine we must not derogate any more than there might be Alterations made in the building of the Tabernacle; for the Principles of it are cemented or knit together, that the only way to preserve the Structure, is to keep the Doctrine entire. ... This Form of Doctrine which our Lord hath delivered unto us to keep, consists of Six Principles; which according to Scripture Account, we find was taught and practiced by the Primitive Saints: And however this Form has been altered or changed by any that have called themselves Christians it is our Business to keep the Rule; and therein to be safe. It is true, this Doctrine hath been defaced, and much blemished, by the Romish Church, that Scarlet Coloured Whore, who hath made the Kings of the Earth drunk with the wine of her Fornications; but then it is our part to get out of her Confusions.... These are the Foundation Principles of the Christian Religion...."

The Six Principles are then discussed in the six chapters of the work:

1. Of Repentance from Dead Works.

"God Commands all Men everywhere to Repent."

2. Of Faith towards God.

Faith is "a Grace of the Spirit of God, whereby we Assent to the Truth of those things which God hath revealed to us in his Word, and depend on the certainty of his Promise for accomplishing what he hath declared." It is called "Faith towards God" ... "because it is placed on the Lord Jesus Christ, who is God and Man..." and because "it is exercised in God the Father...."

3. Of the Doctrine of Baptisms

There is a baptism which is commanded: with water, and there is a baptism that is Promised: of the Spirit.

(A Dutch translation of the Scriptures is cited on its use of Dipper and Dipped.)

4. Of Laying on of Hands

There are four New Testament usages: In healing the sick, on ordaining officers of the Church, for receiving extraordinary gifts of the Holy Spirit (though there is no special scriptural authority for this), and upon baptized believers as such. In the case of the last usage, the laying on of hands is not to be repeated, it being a Foundation Principle in order to the receiving of the Holy Spirit.

5. Of the Resurrection of the dead.

6. Of Eternal Judgment.

Before 1660 most of the Baptist churches of England and Wales

apparently had faced the question of the Six Principles, and almost all outside of certain General Baptist churches of London and vicinity had decided against making Hebrews vi:1-2 a symbol or creed. The Laying on of Hands was the controversial point, and on this matter difference of opinion was rarely considered important enough to disturb the fellowship of the churches. The Griffith churches, however, were adamant in standing for the new basis of church order. If they took the position upheld by Thomas Lover, author of their 1654 Confession, trouble with fellow churches was certain to ensue. Lover wrote that he

"must out of conscience deny fellowship to all those that do deny any of these particulars that is here [in the Confession] declared, knowing that it is impossible for them that deny any of those things to hold out to the end in any Church-way, but will in time be scattered the one from the other, because they are not in the true faith...." 1.

This dogmatic stand the Griffith churches must have taken, and it must have prevented their going on with other General Baptists in approving an official Confession of Faith of the General Assembly barely two months after the appearance of the Six-Principle Declaration in January. Between 1654 and 1657 the Six-Principle Baptists preached, largely by means of pamphlets, the Laying on of Hands, and opposed the objections of both General and Particular Baptists. Among the former, Robert Everard, Thomas Morris, Samuel Oates, and John Gosnold were opposed.² These men did not, of course, belong to the Griffith circle.³ It appears, then, that because the General As-

1. In "The Author to the Reader."

2. Vid. Whitley, A Baptist Bibliography.

3. Neither did Peter Chamberlen nor Thomas Tillam, who took up the cause of Laying on Hands, but they were Sabbatarian Baptists.

sembly Churches would not accept the Six Principles as the authoritative and only official platform, though they agreed to the Laying on of Hands, the Griffith group withdrew.^{1.} On the other hand, others may have withdrawn because of the official adoption of the Laying on of Hands.^{2.} By 1665 some kind of a reconciliation seems to have been effected which was evidently a compromise, for the Assembly later, we know, had concurrent symbols: the Confession of 1660 and the Six Principles.^{3.} In 1690 there was another division, and the Six-Principle Baptists set up their own Assembly.^{4.} In America, Six-Principle Baptists were established under the leadership of Roger Williams and others, and they had a separate existence for many years.

3.

The most pressing problems of the Baptist churches in late 1659 and early 1660, however, were not doctrinal. Rather, they concerned the violent attacks which were being made against the name and the liberties of Baptists. One of the last acts of the Presbyterian party, in 1658, before their fall, had been the passing of a law providing the death penalty for eight errors of doctrine, including denial of the Trinity, and giving indefinite imprisonment for sixteen other "errors," one being the denial of infant baptism. Vedder says that "Nothing but the overthrow of the Long Parliament, and with it the Presbyterian domination, prevented a more tyrannous and implacable persecution than any that disgraces the fair pages of England's

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1. Griffith and his group seem also to have had nothing to do with the important joint-defense declaration of 1661 which spoke for many kinds of Baptists. Vid. Chapter V.
 2. Vid. Whitley, A Baptist Bibliography, p. 89.
 3. Whitley, Minutes of the General Assembly, Vol.1, p. xix.
 4. Goadby, Bye-Paths in Baptist History, p. 37.

annals."^{1.} Even with the overthrow of the Long Parliament, the outlook for Baptists was not bright. The hated monarchy might be restored, or the Presbyterian party might return to power. Following Richard Cromwell's resignation on May 25, 1659, the Army recalled the Rump, but conflict broke out anew, and the Rump was expelled by the soldiers.

A royalist reaction then set in quickly, as people saw that the restoration of the Stuarts was the one way by which absolute rule by the Army could be prevented. General Monk, who had come down with his troops from Scotland, sent Sir John Grenville to Charles II in Breda, Holland, to advise on offers which he should make. There was nothing the Baptists could do; their political program had lost its unity, and the last bulwark against the restoration of the Stuarts had been removed. Nevertheless, there was yet much talk of complicated political intrigues; and Baptists were regarded as "the most dangerous"^{2.} plotters and sectaries.

During the last six months before the Restoration, Baptists were, in spite of the general excitement, remarkably quiet:

"Whether their silence was that of despair or whether they, like the great majority of Englishmen, tired of the confusion of the past months, and of rapidly succeeding changes of government, saw in the return of monarchy the possibility of the return to peace and stability, to uninterrupted trade and reasonable prosperity, the Baptists no longer interfered in public affairs, hoping perhaps, if they lived peaceably, a grateful monarch would not deny ... liberty of conscience." ^{3.}

At least, they might by their quietness convince the new sovereign of their peaceful intentions and claim his mercy. A few Baptists

1. A Short History of Baptists, pp. 149-150.
 2. Brown, L. op. cit., p. 198.
 3. Ibid., pp. 199-200.

would go on trying to the bitter end. There was the pathetic figure of Praise-God Barbon presenting a last petition to the restored Long Parliament, requesting that all clergymen and officials be obliged to take an oath against Charles Stuart!^{1.} But nearly all Baptists knew that the era in which they might freely experiment with and apply their cherished principles had passed. They had "stood for the ideal of a perfect state, and in the struggle to realize that ideal they succeeded only in contributing to the failure of the compromise represented by the Protectorate."^{2.}

It was against this somber and confusing background that a General Assembly of General Baptists met in London in March, 1660. By the time the Assembly had approved its Confession of Faith, the Declaration of Charles II from Breda was less than a month away.^{3.} It is immediately clear upon reading the latter part of the Confession that this group of Baptists, who, indeed, had never been so prominently involved in political affairs as had members of some Particular Baptist groups, was not so much concerned with possible changes of government as with the fearful slanders of opponents. Evidently specific accusations were in mind, as the Assembly said,

"Moreover we do utterly, and from our hearts, in the Lord's fear, declare against all those wicked, and devillish reports falsely cast upon us, as though some of us (in & about the City of London) had lately GOTTEN KNIVES, HOOKED KNIVES, & the like, & great store of Arms besides what was given forth by order of Parliament, intending to cut the throats of such as were contrary minded to us in matters of religion, and that many such KNIVES, and Armes, for the carrying on such secret design, hath been found in some of our houses by search; we say, from truth of heart, in the Lord's fear, that we do

1. Brown, *l. op. cit.*, p. 196. Barbon probably never became a Baptist, but politically he stood with the Baptists.

2. Brown, *l. op. cit.*, p. 205.

3. April 4.

utterly abhor, and abominate the thoughts thereof, and much more the actions; and do hereby challenge both City, and Country (in our innocency herein) as being not able to prove the things whereof they accuse us; and do forever more declare the Inventors of such reports, to be lyars, and wicked devisers of mischeife (sic), and corrupt designs...." 1.

4.

2.

By 1660 General Baptists numbered about 20,000; theirs had been a remarkable growth for some fifty difficult years. Yet, in considerably less time than that, the Particular Baptists had probably grown even beyond that number. Whitley, by studying lists of the Midland Association of 1651 and the General Assemblies of 1654 and 1656, has identified seventy-nine General Baptist churches which were organized by 1656. These were to be found in eighteen English counties, the largest numbers being in Lincolnshire and Kent, seven-
4. teen and fourteen, respectively. He later reported knowledge of one hundred and fifteen General and one hundred and thirty-one Particular Baptist churches which existed by 1660, when General Baptist churches
5. were to be found in twenty-five English counties. The great years of General Baptist growth were 1650, 1651, and 1656, in connection with which thirty-one, eleven, and thirteen churches, respectively,
6. are heard of for the first time. Such growth offered special problems. It certainly called loudly for organization on a national scale, since local leadership in most General Baptist churches was weak. The General Assemblies, then, were not called primarily for

1. Whitley, Minutes of the General Assembly, pp. 20-21.

2. Clifford, The English Baptists, p. 22.

3. Minutes of the General Assembly, pp. lvi-lxvii.

4. "Baptist Churches till 1660," in Transactions Baptist Hist. Soc., Vol. 2 (1910-11), pp. 236-246.

5. Underwood, A History of English Baptists, p. 85, reports that Jordan, by working over the data more recently, has counted 297 churches (General and Particular) in England and Wales by 1660.

6. "Baptist Churches till 1660," loc. cit.

the discussion of national issues, except as those issues offered pressing problems for the churches.

5.

The forty men who signed the Confession of 1660 were a fairly representative group in that they represented the chief General Baptist districts. Of the thirty names which can be tentatively identified, thirteen belong to London, eight to Kent, and at least one each to Hertfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Lincolnshire, Sussex, Surrey, and Northamptonshire. It is remarkable that among the signatories the only ones who had signed The Faith and Practice of Thirty Congregations in 1651 were Benjamin Morely and Francis Stanley of Ravens-thorp, Northamptonshire. What about the representation of the great General Baptist fellowship in Lincolnshire and Leicestershire? It was, to say the least, disproportionately small. Were representatives present in numbers from these areas who refused the doctrine of Laying on of Hands and so did not sign the Confession? These questions we cannot certainly answer, for the records of the Assembly of 1660 have not been preserved, and we do not know how many representatives attended the meeting. Of this we may be sure, the Confession of 1660 did not represent all the General Baptists of England, to say nothing of Wales. From its concern with local (London) conditions, from the apparent absence of Leicestershire and Warwickshire names among the signatories, and from the fact that the Confession did not

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1. Facts which possibly bear on this question are the following:
- (1) Samuel Oates, who opposed Laying on of Hands, evangelized and founded churches in the Midlands.
 - (2) Two leading General Baptist opponents of the practice, Thomas Morris and Robert Everard, were from the Midlands.
 - (3) When, in 1661, the Assembly group petitioned that the Declaration of Breda be fulfilled, Leicestershire was not represented among the counties petitioning. Vid. Whitley, A Baptist Bibliography, pp. 37, 59, and 239, respectively.

become the "Standard" Confession of General Baptists until 1663, it might be concluded that the Confession spoke in 1660 very largely for General Baptists of London and vicinity, though not for all of them. Throughout the Commonwealth Period, there were groups of General Baptists in London and in the provinces who were out of fellowship with, and sometimes in opposition to, the Assembly Churches. If twenty-five counties had General Baptists by 1660, it is noteworthy that probably only seven or eight of them were represented by signatories of the Confession, though the Assembly of that year may have been called to meet hurriedly and so there would not have been time for some Baptists to come great distances. There must be significance in the indefiniteness of the legend which the Confession bears: "Set forth by many of us ... called Anabaptists."

Among the signatories a few were outstanding. Joseph Wright, whose name heads the list, came from Maidstone, Kent, but he had been^{1.} set apart to the office of Messenger by the Church at Fenstanton.^{2.} Crosby says he was "bred at the university." and a man of great learning who practiced physic. Wright had signed the Assembly statement of 1656, but not that of 1654. Next comes the name of William Jeffery,^{3.} to whose "quenchless ardour and unwearied toil" Rudge traces the origin of many of the strongest Free-churches of Kent. Coming to the Assembly as the Messenger from Bradburn and Sevenoaks, he had also signed the declarations of 1654 and 1656. His biographer says that at the age of thirty-two he was considered "one of the ablest

1. Whitley, Minutes of the General Assembly, Vol. 1, p. xxviii.

2. Op. cit., Vol. 3, p. 116.

3. William Jeffery: The Puritan Apostle of Kent, p. 33.

expositors and defenders of Puritan ideals and Free-Church principles";^{1.} and in 1659, fifteen years later, he published a second edition of his remarkable doctrinal work, The Whole Faith of Man. This book was by 1660 "a standard work of reference and appeal" for General Baptists on matters of practice as well as of doctrine.^{2.} In view of these facts, it seems reasonable to suppose that Jeffery had very much responsibility in connection with the preparation of the Confession of 1660. It may, indeed, have been he who first recommended that the Assembly prepare an official Confession. Certainly the supposition^{3.} of McGlothlin that Thomas Grantham composed the Confession is an erroneous one. Grantham did not even sign the Confession in 1660. He first appears outside of Lincolnshire in connection^{4.} with a petition of Baptists of his county to Charles II in 1661, and he was ordained a Messenger only in 1666.^{5.} Some help on the Confession could be expected from Thomas Monck, whose name occurs in third place in the list of signatories. Little is known about him except that he came from Berkhamstead, in Hertfordshire, and that twenty years later he is supposed to have drafted the well known "Orthodox Confession" of the General Baptists of Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire,^{6.} Hertfordshire, and Bedfordshire.

Matthew Caffyn's name must be noted. Upon accepting Baptist principles as an undergraduate at Oxford, he was expelled. His Arminianism having already been learned at Oxford, he soon became a

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1. William Jeffery: The Puritan Apostle of Kent, pp. 37-38.
 2. Whitley, Minutes of the General Assembly, Vol. 1, p. 19.
 3. Baptist Confessions of Faith, pp. 109-110.
 4. Underhill, Confessions of Faith, pp. 353-356.
 5. Underwood, op. cit., p. 111.
 6. Whitley, supra., p. xix.

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 prominent General Baptist leader in Kent and Sussex. Whitley suggests he was the only man at the Assembly of 1660 who had received university training, but it must not be forgotten that William Russell of Dean Street, London, was a physician who later (if not in 1660) had the degrees of Master of Arts and Doctor of Medicine,^{2.} and that Joseph Wright also probably had received university medical training. Caffyn's Arminianism and Hoffmanite Christology were to develop until they became a cause for division of the Assembly, when^{3.} the Midland churches which opposed him withdrew in 1696. Caffyn's liberal views may not have been prominent in 1660; at least they were not a bar to fellowship in the Assembly. Evidently the basis of union in that body was intended to be loose in principle; it was^{4.} before long loose enough, says Stokes, to include a man of Arminian belief like Whiston and another of Socinian leanings like Emlyn. Even William Jeffery's christological views will be shown to have been somewhat unorthodox. This very liberalism in the Assembly was to be a cause of lowering the importance of the Assembly and of shortening its life. Nevertheless, the General Baptist leaders felt that the Assembly must be comprehensive enough to include those who, like some of their continental antecedents, preferred to quote Scripture without explanation rather than accept the theological forms of Nicea and Chalcedon. Their Confession does speak in language which is as exclusively scriptural as possible for such a document; usually the connectives only are grudgingly non-scriptural.

1. Minutes of the General Assembly, p. xxii.

2. Ibid., p. xli.

3. Ibid., p. xxii.

4. History Midland Association of Baptist Churches, p. 13.

II. Contents of the Confession

1. Structure

The Confession of 1660 has twenty-five comprehensive articles, but its detail does not equal that of the Confession of the Midland churches of 1651. It is more truly a Confession of Faith, and less a statement of practice. Most questions of practice had been worked out in the churches by 1660; what was needed was a doctrinal apology and platform. In clarity and definiteness of statement the Confession hardly matches the Particular Baptist Confession of 1644. The arrangement of subjects is at times strange. At the beginning, the doctrines of God, Man, Christ, and Salvation are treated in single articles, in order, but then comes an Article on Ordination, and after that one on Justification. Again, between Articles on Falling from Grace and the Resurrection^{1.} appears an Article on Relief of Needy Saints, as though it were an after-thought concerning the Church. This poor arrangement of subjects might indicate that the Confession was drawn up hurriedly. In the few cases where more than one article is given to a subject, as with Eschatology, there is a progressive arrangement of articles. The authors may have had the Midland Confession of 1651 before them, and possible several other contemporary Confessions; but, they seem to have followed none in their arrangement of subjects, but to have shown the usual General Baptist independence in the matter. Because of the vast importance of this Confession, both doctrinally and historically, to our understanding of the General Baptists of the middle of the seventeenth century, the document should be studied thoroughly.

1. Articles 18 and 20.

2. Theological Outlook

Fifty years had wrought little change in the theological outlook of General Baptists. The Helwys Church of 1611 would have owned the General Assembly as its theological offspring. The Arminianism of both groups was carefully moderate. The latter Confession was not as explicit as that of 1611 concerning the Results of the Fall, being content to state that man "came into a miserable and mortal estate, subject unto the first death."¹ Did the "miserable and mortal estate" involve the loss of all "disposition or will unto any good," as the 1611 Confession said? On this point perhaps there was intentional silence in 1660. The statement denying inherited guilt is explicit enough:

"... all Children dying in Infancy, having not actually transgressed against the Law of God in their own persons, are only subject to the first death, which comes upon them by the sin of the first 'Adam'; and not that any one of them (dying in that estate) shall suffer for 'Adams' sin, eternal punishment in Hell, (which is the second death) 'for of such belongs the kingdome of Heaven...'. " 2.

Over against that view, the position of Calvinistic Paedobaptists is pointed out:

"who though they plead much for the bringing of children into the visible Church here on earth by 'Baptisme,' yet nevertheless by their Doctrine that Christ dyed but for some, shut a great part of them out of the Kingdome of Heaven for ever." 3.

Instead of the unnatural arrangement of bringing children into the visible Church, and instead of the difficulty of having to decide who are the elect ones, the authors said, why not conclude that Christ died for all? And since Christ died for all, the Gospel

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1. Article 2, Whitley, Minutes of the General Assembly, p. 11. All quotations from the Confession are taken from this work, pp.10-21.
 2. Article 10.
 3. Article 10.

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 should be preached to all. This is the order of statement in the Confession, but was it the order of reasoning in the minds of the authors? Their strongest conviction was that the Gospel must be preached to all; that was an ordinance, a command of Christ, and since that was so, it must be possible for all to be saved. Perhaps they spoke from experience in conditioning their assertion that all may be eternally saved when they said that "all men, at one time or other, are put into such a capacity."^{2.}

Predestination is not mentioned in the Confession, but Election is said to have been decreed even before the foundation of the world for "such as believe," and condemnation was 'of old ordained' for such as "turn the grace of God into wantonness" and deny the Lord. "God indeed sends a strong delusion to men, that they might be damned; but we observe that they are such ... that 'receive not the love of the truth, that they might be saved...'.^{3.}" Election is held to be always due to God's mercy, goodness, and compassion; but condemnation is always due to man's ungodliness. As for "Falling from Grace," a true believer may "for want of watchfulness^{4.} ;swerve and turn aside ... and become as withered Branches" But those who "add unto their Faith Vertue, and unto Vertue Knowledge ... 'shall never fall'." It is not clear whether the authors meant to say that a believer might possess and then lose eternal life; at least they did not employ as explicit language as the Confession of 1611: "That a righteous man might forsake his righteousness and perish."^{5.} Indeed, in

1. Article 4.
 2. Article 4.
 3. Article 8.

4. Article 18.

5. Article 7, Underhill, op. cit., p. 5.

another Article they moved toward the Particular Baptist position enough to say that the Holy Spirit makes "such as 'obey him' ... able (without which they are altogether unable) to abide steadfast in the faith...."^{1.}

3. Christology

The Christology of the Confession is largely contained in Article 3. It sounds quite orthodox, and like the Article on the subject in the 1611 Confession it appears to make a point of so sounding. None the less, the silence on the subject of Christ's "substance" might have allowed for the somewhat unorthodox views of Jeffery and others on the matter. Jeffery felt that Christ the Redeemer could have been under no obligation to human kind for any part of His nature, though he came of the line of David and was born of Mary. With this view which sought to glorify the person of Christ, and which was held by certain General Baptists of Kent and London, usually went a denial of the term "Trinity," but not a denial of the humanity of Christ.^{2.} This Confession first asserts Christ's divinity and his birth of the Virgin, then it declares that Christ was David's Lord, Root, Son, and Offspring. In 1678, when Thomas Grantham edited the Confession, and after Matthew Caffyn had made the question of the humanity of Christ an issue in General Baptist circles, the clause concerning Christ's relation to David was changed to read, "Being the true Lord and root of David, and also his son and offspring according to the flesh."^{3.} Before that time, Caffyn held, with the Hoffmanite Anabaptists, that while Christ was incarnate, he had not

1. Article 7.

2. Burgess, John Smyth, the Se-Baptist, pp. 177-178.

3. Whitley, Minutes of the General Assembly, p. 11, Vol. 1.

received His flesh from Mary, but from God; He had only passed
 through Mary.^{1.}^{2.} Champlin Burrage says the "prevailing strain of
 teaching" of early English Anabaptism was of the Hoffmanite type, but
 there is no evidence that a majority of the General Baptists held
 Hoffmanite views in 1560. Orthodox christological views must have
 prevailed in the General Assembly at that time. Perhaps Caffyn's
 Hoffmanite opinions had not developed by 1560, or if they had he did
 not scruple to sign the Confession.

4. The Church

There is no succinct definition of the Church, but the teaching
 concerning the Church is elaborate. First, the "right and only way
 of gathering Churches" is outlined.^{3.} The Gospel is to be taught or
 preached to "the Sons and Daughters of men"; only those who profess
 repentance and faith are to be baptized; then it is the duty of bap-
 tized believers to submit to Prayer and Laying on of Hands, "that they
 may receive the promise of the holy Spirit." Finally, it is the duty
 of the body thus constituted to engage in church fellowship, which
 consists in being faithful to Christ's and the Apostles' Doctrine,
 in assembling together, in breaking Bread, and in Prayers.^{4.} Article
 11 offers the two equally valid baptismal formulae: "in the name of
 the Father, Son and holy Spirit," and "in the name of the Lord Jesus
 Christ." To Baptize is said, in English, to mean to dip, and "that
 Scriptureless thing of Sprinkling of Infants" is strongly pronounced
 against as confounding the New Testament method of bringing members

1. Underwood, op. cit., p. 106.

2. Early English Dissenters, Vol. 1, p. 195 fn.

3. Article 11.

4. Articles 11-13.

into a church by substituting natural generation for spiritual regeneration.

The Laying on of Hands prescribed in Article 12 must have been something of an innovation for the Assembly, and there is some doubt as to whether most General Baptist churches already practised it upon receiving new members. It had, of course, always been used in connection with the ordination of Elders and Deacons. One of the earliest references to the practice in the case of all incoming members is found in a letter from the Church at Westby to the Church at Fenstanton in 1653.¹ The practice was also known among some Particular Baptists. The Churches of Jessey and Knollys in London did not oppose it, though they would not make it a term of communion. The same attitude toward the practice was taken by the Welsh Particular Association as early as 1651.² In the General Baptist body the importance of the Laying on of Hands was accentuated by the adoption of the Six Principles in some quarters, and in both bodies, by the accession of several clergymen of the Established Church. The Episcopal clergy had known the practice under the name of Confirmation, and several of them -- Richard Cornwall being an outstanding example³ -- seem to have insisted on keeping it. It must be remembered, however, that the practice was named in neither the 1611 Confession of the Helwys Church nor the 1651 Confession of the Midlands. The churches of London, Kent, Lincoln, and other parts, which did practice Laying on of Hands were usually very strict in its observance, considering it a corollary of baptism.

1. Whitley, Minutes of the General Assembly, p. xx.

2. Ibid.

3. Vid. "Sandhurst Bicentenary," in The Baptist Quarterly, Vol. 5, (1930-31), pp. 322-323.

The officers of a church are said to be Elders or Pastors and Deacons. The qualifications of Elders are first given, and then their duties are defined as "to feed the flock with meat in due season, and in much love to rule over them, with all care, seeking^{1.} after such as go astray." Self-seeking ministers are testified against. Article 16 prescribes voluntary support for ministers, and denounces tithes or any forced maintenance of the ministry. Deacons are called "Overseers of the poor," their work being the collection and distribution of free and voluntary gifts of the churches so that the needs of the poor members be met. Deacons, like Elders, are to be chosen by the church, and their ordination is to be by Prayer and^{2.} Laying on of Hands.

The disciplinary standards of the General Baptists had not changed in their fifty-year history. "Hereticks" are to be rejected, after a first and second admonition, the Confession says, and members of the churches who profess the way of the Lord but whose lives deny their profession are to be withdrawn from. "Hereticks," who were excommunicated, seem to have been identified as those who renounced their faith and church-relationship; other offenders, who were withdrawn from, were those who in any way caused "divisions or offenses"^{3.} while yet in the church.

As to the attitude these General Baptists took toward paedobaptist groups, there are two clear statements. In Article 11 they said concerning those who cling to the "old Testament-way" of building

1. Article 15.
2. Article 19.
3. Article 17.

the Church, "all such we utterly deny, forasmuch as we are commanded to 'have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather to reprove them'." Then in Article 19 the "Church of Christ" is contrasted in the matter of the method of relieving the needs of the poor with "others, who being constituted in a fleshly generational way, are necessitated to make use of a carnal sword, to compel even a small, mean and short Maintenance for their poor." Note was made of the fact that meanwhile "many other Members of their Churches" did not hesitate to part with great sums of money to keep up their vain fashions, their "Gold, Pearls, and costly Array," contrary to the Word of God. The isolationism of the Assembly churches is thus indicated; they had not known such fellowship with any group as some of the Particular churches had known with Independents and others.

5. Holy Living

The strength of the statement of the necessity for holy living probably went beyond the General Baptist's Puritan situation to Anabaptist sources. There is the old Anabaptist emphasis on the poverty of orthodoxy to a person of unholy conversation. A church, the Confession says, may be erected exactly by the primitive pattern, but unless its members "beautifie" it with an holy walk, the correctness of form is useless. Then a favorite text is quoted: Hebrews xii.14,^{1.} "For without holiness no man shall see the Lord." In other Articles^{2.} it is made clear that this holiness is not of merit, but entirely the result of the inner working of the Holy Spirit, Who enables men to "live in all things answerable to their professed intentions."

1. Article 14.

2. Articles 7 and 12.

So sure were the authors that the fruits of the Spirit are 'Love, Peace, Longsuffering, Gentleness, Goodness, Meekness, and Temperance,' that they denied the Spirit's presence to be in those who refuse liberty of conscience to all who disagree with them, even though the oppressors appear to walk uprightly.^{1.}

6. Eschatology

The Confession contains a more elaborate Eschatology than any Baptist Confession of the period. The language of the three Articles on the subject is strictly scriptural, quotations being taken with equal freedom from both Testaments. The first two Articles concern a general Resurrection and a general Judgment, respectively, and the third, the Reign of Christ and His Saints.^{2.} In this last-named Article the authors disavowed the Fifth-Monarchy movement by indirection. While recording Daniel vii.7, "For unto the Saints shall be given the Kingdome, and the greatness of the Kingdome...", they called attention to the concluding words of the quotation, "under the whole Heaven" (i.e., not in England only), and show that the return of the Saints with Christ cannot take place until Christ returns. Only that cataclysm could set up the new order.

7. Liberty of Conscience

There can be no doubt that the climax of the Confession is reached in the last two Articles. Article 24 stands as one of the clearest statements of the seventeenth century for absolute liberty of conscience. From a knowledge of the events of the day, it is not

1. Article 7.

2. Articles 20, 21, and 22.

too much to say that the Confession was drawn up largely that this cherished principle of the General Baptists might find fresh expression. The authors could not remain silent on the subject of soul-liberty until Article 24 was reached, but they sought in several places to show its vital connection with the innermost verities of their faith. Their declaration in Article 7 has been noted, where the envy of their opponents, that this liberty was had by those who differed from them, was said to be an evidence of the absence of the Holy Spirit. In Article 22 the future Kingdom-reign of Christ is contrasted with the begrudging attitude of the present order toward the very existence of the Saints.

In Article 24 the Baptists enunciated their principle in full:

"It is the will, and mind of God ... that all men should have the free liberty of their own CONSCIENCES in matters of Religion, or Worship, without the least oppression, or persecution, as simply upon that account...." 1.

Their whole argument is based upon the "mind of God " and the "mind of Christ" (especially as seen in the Golden Rule, Matthew vii.12). As Jordan remarks, concerning the outlook of Edward Barber, all General Baptists "discovered in the doctrine of general redemption a conception of faith which made all religious persecution abhorrent and impious."² In their demand for this liberty for "all" it cannot be doubted that they meant to include all kinds of people, and every person. Their dictum was: let the tares and the wheat grow together until the end of the world. In 1660 this was with them no freshly-discovered principle; they had been urging it from the day the first

1. Article 24.

2. Quoted in Underwood, A History of the English Baptists, p. 86.

General Baptist church began its life. John Smyth had helped them preach it in his one-hundred-article Confession: "... Christ only^{1.} is the king, and lawgiver of the church and conscience." Thomas Helwys published his mighty plea, The Mystery of Iniquity, in 1612. Leonard Busher followed him in 1614 with a fuller exposition, Religions Peace; or, A Plea for Liberty of Conscience, in which he declared this freedom should extend to Jews, Papists, Turks, and all others.^{2.} John Murton asserted, the next year, in Objections Answered "that no man ought to be persecuted for his religion...",^{3.} and in 1620 his contention in a petition was the same.

With the coming of the period of the civil wars the principle was preached with the greatest energy, as there seemed some prospect of its general acceptance. With the return of Roger Williams from America in 1643, after ten years' experience with intolerance there, a new force was added to their campaign to convince the public. Williams' exposition of his views, The Bloody Tenent of Persecution for Cause of Conscience discussed ..., was tremendously influential^{4.} in official circles. The House of Commons was petitioned repeatedly on behalf of liberty of conscience during the Commonwealth Period by various General Baptist groups. For example, in 1652 there was a petition made by a group in Leicestershire, and early the next year^{5.} a similar one was presented by a London group. Some London Particular Baptists thought it expedient (i.e., essential to a favorable

1. Article 84, Barclay, op. cit., Chap. 6, Appendix, p. xiii.

2. Evans, Early English Baptists, Vol. 1, p. 229.

3. Whitley, A Baptist Bibliography, pp. 7-8.

4. Fletcher, History Revival and Progress of Independency, pp. 54-55.

5. Evans, supra, Vol. 2, p. 187.

reception of their petition) to exclude popery and non-Christian faiths from the benefits of a full religious liberty when they petitioned in 1659; but this limitation of the principle of freedom of conscience brought immediate protests from General Baptists, as^{1.} has been shown. No expediency ever swayed the General Baptists from their loyalty to this idea.

8. Omissions and Weaknesses

A few omissions and weaknesses of the Confession should be noted. First, there is no mention of the place of Messengers and of the obligation of each church to carry on missionary work. A number of Messengers who were engaged in such work signed the Confession, and the conclusion must be that their office was so universally accepted that there was no use to be served in defining it again. Still one is surprised that it is not mentioned. The theological outlook of the group and the assertion that preaching and teaching the Gospel to the world is the only right way to begin the gathering of churches are sufficient proof of the missionary spirit of the churches. In Article 19 there is one passing reference to the obligation of "the Churches" to provide for the "poor saints belonging to the Church of Christ." The practice of the churches in advancing to the formation of a General Assembly was evidently thought to make unnecessary any theoretical statement about the inter-relations of the churches. There is no mention, as in the 1651 Confession, of the propriety of the churches assisting one another in judging concerning matters of local disagreement, but silence on the subject does not deny the practice.

1. Vid. also Brown, Baptists and Fifth-Monarchy Men, p. 8.

Apparently the General Assembly had not yet concerned itself with such matters. It was a medium of fellowship and consultation on common problems and tasks, and it possessed no such authority as was later given it. Finally, there is no statement as to the meaning of the Lord's Supper. Aside from urging the continuation of the practice of observing the Supper as a church ordinance, it is not mentioned.

9. Silence concerning the Quakers

The authors of the Confession seem not to have been very conscious of Quaker pressure, though in stating their positions on the Scriptures, on Support of the Ministry, on the Ordinances, and on Justification they must have had in mind the Quaker doctrines which stood in opposition to them. The danger of the moment, however, was not from the side of the Quakers.

III. Use and Worth of the Confession

1.

The appearance of the Confession on March 15, 1660, did little toward halting the persecution of Baptists; for after May 29, when Charles II was elevated to his ancestral throne, their trials were increased. However pleasant the King's early promises of religious freedom sounded to their ears, they became worth little in practice. Opponents of the Baptists saw in the Restoration a long-awaited opportunity to rid the kingdom of the despised group. A favorite device of the enemies of the Baptists was to commit any kind of outrage^{1.} upon them under pretense of searching for concealed arms. The Baptists

1. Underhill (editor), Tracts on Liberty of Conscience, pp. 291-294.

decided to go straight to the King with their grievances. Apparently General and Particular Baptists acted in concert on July 26. Messengers from Lincolnshire General Baptists appeared on that day before the King bearing an appeal for clemency and justice signed by thirty-five people on behalf of themselves and many others. The Lincolnshire Baptists had been threatened with heavy fines for non-attendance at the parish churches; the courts of justice had abused them; and they had been made to suffer in many ways. They were surely the ones to present the grievances of all who suffered for conscience. To the account of their sufferings the Lincolnshire group added the Confession of Faith which they had helped draw up in London in March, and they put both into the hands of the King. On the same day London Particular Baptists presented the King An Apology ... in behalf of themselves and others of the same judgment with them. In the Apology they gave proofs of their loyalty and cried out against the false accusations of their enemies. The King gave in return "fair words."^{1.}

2.

If the persecutions of Lincolnshire and London Baptists were for a short season stayed, it was not so with Baptists in many other parts of the country. In August Baptist churches in Wales founded by Vavasor Powell were ordered to be disbanded; in September the Lords ordered the suppression of the Northamptonshire churches; in November John Bunyan was put into Bedford Gaol; and during all the latter

1. Whitley, History of British Baptists, p. 106.

part of the year many Kent General Baptists were imprisoned. All of these persecutions were, of course, in the name of civil order. The insurrection in London led by Venner, the Independent Fifth-Monarchist, on January 7, 1661, would have been the signal for a new and more terrible wave of persecution of the Baptists except that by that time "the Cavaliers were flying at higher game," i.e., seeking the suppression of the more numerous and important Presbyterians. Indeed, Whitley says the Baptists "escaped utter extermination, humanly speaking, only by the policy which forced Presbyterians into dissent, and so gave to the government a far more serious task than hunting down obscurer and smaller sects." As it turned out, there was comparative quiet for the Baptists until 1664. Repeated Baptist allegations of loyalty and statements of principles probably encouraged the King to show them more tolerance than he would have otherwise. He even gave Roger Williams a charter for Rhode Island which recognized the Baptist principle of freedom of conscience.

3.

In 1663 the General Baptists thought it safe to call again a General Assembly. At that meeting the Confession of 1660 was slightly revised and affirmed by a larger circle. From this date it was regarded as the "Standard" Confession of General Baptists. In 1678, Thomas Grantham edited the Confession, with "a few explanatory supplements, and the testimony of many ancient writers of Christianity," and the changes made by him were approved by the Assembly of 1691.

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1. Underhill (editor), Tracts on Liberty of Conscience, pp. 291-294.
 2. Whitley, History of British Baptists, pp. 102-103.
 3. Ibid.
 4. Whitley, Minutes of the General Assembly, p. 22, Vol. 1.
 5. McGlothlin, op. cit., pp. 109-110.

A further revision was made about 1700 by Joseph Hooke of Hackenby,^{1.} Messenger in Lincolnshire, at the request of the General Assembly.

4.

The Confession of 1660 was exceedingly important to the life of the General Baptists. Those whom it represented regarded it highly, giving it a prominent place in their meetings, and having it 'printed on a sheet to be hung up in a frame'^{2.} in their homes. It was chiefly valuable in serving the General Baptist churches as a basis of union for well over forty years, and in serving as a specific body of doctrine by which they could hold during the dark years, 1664-1672, when such little intercourse and organization were possible.

5.

Three copies of the original edition of the Confession are known, one being in each of the following places: Angus Library, Regent's Park College, Oxford, University Library, Cambridge, and the British Museum, London.^{3.} Crosby in 1739 conflated the original edition and that of 1691 as an appendix to the second volume of his History of the English Baptists. Underhill conflated again (though his sources are unknown) in 1854 as he included the Confession in his Confessions of Faith. Whitley prepared a critical edition in 1909 for his Minutes of the General Assembly, and McGlothlin reprinted the original in 1911 for his Baptist Confessions of Faith.

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1. Whitley, Minutes of the General Assembly, p. 22, Vol. 1.
 2. McGlothlin, Baptist Confessions of Faith, pp. 109-110.
 3. Whitley, A Baptist Bibliography, p. 76.

CHAPTER V

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE CONFESSIONS

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CHAPTER V (continued)

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CHAPTER V

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE CONFESSIONS

I. Nature and Purpose of the Confessions

1. Importance to the Baptists of the Age Which Produced Them

No period of similar length in the life of the Baptists has been so important to them as the years 1640-1660. Before 1640 the older branch of the Baptist family had exerted its limited resources, without spectacular results, in an ambitious propaganda campaign, and the Particular Baptists had lately come so quietly on the scene that their appearance had attracted little notice outside of Separatist circles; the Baptist movement had been almost entirely underground in character. Baptists had no trained ministry, no wrought-out theological standards, no church-houses, no legal unity, no standing in the community (except that of heretics and anarchists), no wealth of consequence, no part in the government. Yet, thirteen years after 1640 scarcely a group in the kingdom stood above them in the army or in the government. They were witnessing what must have appeared an almost general acceptance of some of their distinguishing ideas, and a phenomenal growth in numbers which would continue at least until 1660. In days of unparalleled political crisis, revolution, and experimentation for England, and of unparalleled religious interest and upheaval for English Christianity, they seized their one golden opportunity in the seventeenth century of coming out of hiding and obscurity, and established their roots in the life of the nation.

In their years of opportunity, the Baptists dispelled the cloud of obloquy in which their name had been popularly held, announced

their principles and program, defined their faith and practice, spread their churches over England and Wales, and entrenched in anticipation of the inevitable political and ecclesiastical reaction which must have as one of its aims the complete extermination of dissent. Anything, therefore, that the Baptists undertook, agreed upon, formulated, or wrote in this vital period is of great importance to all later Baptist life. Nothing is more revealing of their interests and emphases, methods and standards, aims and ideals, problems and trials, than their Confessions of Faith. These Confessions breathe the unchanging spirit of the Baptists while reflecting the stirring climate of the age in which they first came into significance, and they demonstrate the true quality of Baptist unity of principle, program, and passion while giving expression to the often divergent individualism which has been so characteristic of the Baptist movement.

2. Needs Which Gave Them Rise

1.

H. W. Tribble¹ suggests there are three "types of need" which give rise to creeds or confessions. These are:

1. The necessity of refuting heresy, thus achieving doctrinal harmony within the body of believers.
2. The necessity of establishing a policy that gives the church (or other body) authority in requiring conformity of its members.
3. The necessity of defending the faith against attacks from without.

All three of these factors lay behind the preparation of the Baptist Confessions of the Commonwealth Period; but the most important of them by far was the third; and, indeed, the relative importance of

1. "Individual Competency and Use of Creeds," in The Chronicle, April, 1944, pp. 91-92.

the three factors is the reverse of that order in which they are named. Attacks from without clearly furnished the primary provocation for six of the eight Confessions, and were not less than secondary causes in the cases of the other two.

The first and the last of the Confessions of the period were prepared primarily to refute, in two similar national crises, the general accusation that the Baptists were anarchists and breeders of political, social, and religious revolution; but of the seven prepared after 1650, five were largely concerned with refuting the attacks of the Quakers. In addition, the initial Confession of the period was re-edited in 1651 and in 1652 for the same end. In the case of the Midland Particular Confession of 1655, while the main purpose of the document was to serve as a basis of union, the organization of the Association itself was effected largely to confront the Quakers in that area. Two General Baptist Confessions (that of the Midlands in 1651 and of Wales) were designed ostensibly for the primary purpose of propaganda, but each was interested in answering accusers. Not even one Confession was aimed primarily at refuting a counterpart of the other branch of the Baptist family. That the Confessions were in some cases called forth as instruments in associating the churches is seen in the act of the Midland Particular churches, the Midland General churches, and possibly the London Particular and the Western Particular churches, in setting forth a Confession at the date of organization of the Association. The Confessions were, however, more a consequence than a source of the association movement. Except for their apologetic importance they might

never have appeared; but once the Baptists had overcome their natural lukewarmness toward confessions, it was seen by them that they might be put to other than solely apologetic uses.

3. Their Construction and Representation

The Confessions follow no single pattern but show an amazing variety of form and statement. While the Confession of 1644 was based upon the Separatist Confession of 1596, and was itself probably used as a guide for two of the three Particular Baptist Confessions of the period, the use of guiding precedents did not hamper originality of statement by the authors. Only the Somerset Confession of 1656 was interested in showing kinship with another Confession, that of 1644. General Baptist Confessions show the greater variety, no two of them following the same pattern. One reason for this may have been that the General Baptists had no early model emanating from their early center at London as did the Particular Baptists. Had there been such, they might yet not have followed it, for the Midland group in 1651 longed to have their Confession adopted by all General Baptists, but there is no evidence that other groups ever accepted it.

All groups before 1660 were very conscious of the local nature of their Confessions. A Confession represented only those who were officially identified with the signatories, which, except in the case of the Confession of 1660, meant small groups of churches. The largest group of Particular Baptist churches represented by a Confession numbered sixteen; the largest General Baptist group (before 1660), thirty. The variety of form and statement of the Confessions re-

flected the variety of Baptist life of the period. Diversified perspectives were peculiar to different sections of both of the main bodies of Baptists. It was not to be expected that all statements of belief and practice coming from Baptists in Lincolnshire, London, and Wales should be in full agreement. In the period each of these areas was represented in at least one Confession, and so were Kent and the Central and Western Midlands. Particular Baptist Confessions came from points as widely scattered as London, the Midlands, Somerset, and Wales.

4. Their Authorship and Purpose

The chief source of variety in the Confessions of both groups was the personality of individual authorship, which is often unmistakable. Many of the authors had little education; probably only two of them, John Myles and Joseph Wright, were university men. Indeed of all the signatories of first editions only Myles, Wright, William Russell, and Matthew Caffyn were trained in universities, and even these had not received Episcopal ordination. That none of the signatories of first editions, except Myles, had received formal theological training is surprising, too, in view of the fact that numbers of well educated ministers of the Establishment joined the Baptists in this period. Most of them, however, moved in the circle of Particular Baptists which acknowledged the Confession of 1644, which had been issued before they became Baptists, or before they had won general acceptance.

Myles, in spite of his education, prepared a Confession which looks less like a confession of faith than any of the period, but

its originality of form in large measure accounts for its effective use. Some of the other Confessions, as would be expected, lack the literary smoothness and the argumentative force of Myles' Confession, but all of them, like it, were practical in tone and aim. Each was aimed at some immediate need, and its length, style of address, and plan of development were adapted to meeting that need. The two Welsh Confessions are good, if extreme illustrations. When the General Baptists set forth their statement they were concerned about the encircling Calvinism and the baptismal practices of some of their neighbors; so they practically limited themselves to those two subjects. When the Particular Baptists published their Confession the Quakers were the opposing danger; so, much was made of doctrines which stood over against those which were labelled Quaker error. The Confessions were not elaborate or complete theological statements; their authors probably were not capable of advanced theological thinking, and they cared little for abstractions. They used the simple language of their people and of the Scriptures, and declared that they were only recording the beliefs which their own groups held at a particular time. Each Confession might have been labelled with the words which appear in the title of the Confession of 1654: "the Present Faith and Practice of the Church of Christ." No Confession was meant to be authoritative or to be used as a test of orthodoxy.

II. Immediate Use of the Confessions

1. Their Educational Value for the Baptist Fellowship

The Confessions found special use both within and without the churches. As defenses against outside attack they proved most val-

uable, but their educative value for Baptists is not to be forgotten.

^{1.}
Stokes records that one of the Confessions was printed, with Scripture proofs, as a booklet and circulated among the churches. Baptist families then read the articles in their households, comparing them with the Scriptures, and became articulate with their principles. Other Confessions found similar use, but there is no evidence that one was ever used as a church covenant, or a test of church membership. Baptism had taken the place of a church covenant with Baptists. For the sake of organizational harmony, the Confessions were sometimes used as tests of general agreement when churches later sought admission to the associations.^{2.} They served the purpose of keeping the thoughts of Baptists concerning their faith clear and effective.

2. Their Importance as Propaganda Literature

Outside the Baptist fellowship the first task of the Confessions was to rectify the thinking of people concerning the Baptists. Before 1650 they had gone a long way toward doing that, as has been shown, but that task had to be renewed in a special way in 1660. Between 1650 and 1660 the Confessions were addressed to the new task of parrying the blows of the Quakers. Here they were eminently useful.

3. Their Contribution to Baptist Unity

In connection with their defensive work, the Confessions were able to demonstrate the essential unity of the Baptists and to encourage the movement toward the association of churches. Without them the movement of Baptists to the Quaker position would undoubt-

1. History of the Midland Association, pp. 29-30.

2. Vid. Stokes, Ibid., pp. 29-30, for an example of this in 1658.

edly have been far greater, and the Baptists' consciousness of their unity must have been far less,-- in consequence of which they would have been largely unprepared for the period of severe repression which came after 1663. In a word, the Confessions helped give definiteness and strength to the great Baptist conviction that all the ordinances of Christ are to be taken seriously by all His followers. Baptism, the Lord's Supper, and evangelization were to be observed because Christ commanded believers to observe them. It was this firm grasp of principle, as Whitley^{1.} suggests, which gave stability and unity to Baptists of many kinds and saw them through their most trying era, when Presbyterians and other dissenting groups declined and "lost all clear religious programme."

III. Permanent Historical Value of the Confessions

1. As Sources for the Study of Baptist Backgrounds

It has been indicated that the chief permanent value of Baptist Confessions is historical, in view of the fact that they were never intended as authoritarian standards. Their first historical importance naturally concerns the period in which they were produced, but they are also reflective of previous history. A confession is never purely a product of the generation which produces it. Confessions of the latter part of the seventeenth century, for example, point illuminatingly to confessional statements of the Commonwealth Period. Likewise, the Baptist Confessions of the Commonwealth Period throw much light on Baptist backgrounds and on the story of the first half-century of Baptist life. They are uniquely important in

1. History of British Baptists, pp. 102-103.

this respect. Were other historical materials on the connection of English Baptists with continental Anabaptism and with Calvinistic English Separatism non-existent or inconclusive, one might yet plainly trace these connections simply through a comparative study of the doctrines of the Mennonites, of the Separatists, and of the Baptists as revealed in the Baptist Confessions of 1644-1660.

A. General Baptist and Mennonite Kinship

General Baptist beliefs and practices were in general a continuation of Waterlander Mennonite doctrine. It has been shown that the Confession of the first General Baptist Church was in complete agreement with the Waterlander positions except in the matters of oaths, the bearing of arms, and the right of any member to administer the Ordinances. In 1626 the five General Baptist churches then in fellowship had not deviated from the course marked out by the 1611 Confession, and in 1660 General Baptist churches all over the country were in substantial agreement with that Confession.

Thus, General Baptist and Waterlander Mennonite agreement on so many points was more than incidental. Christology, for example, might be a subject in point. General Baptist Christology seems to have attracted no particular attention before 1660. Was it different from Mennonite Christology which, on the other hand, was often suspect? It may have been identical with the main stream of Mennonite Christology of the same period, but it also probably showed as much variety as the several Mennonite views. While some older Mennonites held that the human body of Christ was created by the Holy Spirit, apart from the Virgin Mary, most Mennonite Confessions said nothing

on the subject, and a Synod at Strasburg, in 1555, decreed that Christ took his body and blood of Mary.^{1.} Most Mennonites of 1660,^{2.} and certainly the Waterlanders, would have agreed with the Synod. Two General Baptist Confessions of the Commonwealth Period are, like all but two Mennonite Confessions,^{3.} silent on the subject; but, the 1660 Confession states that Christ was "born of the Virgin Mary," and is truly David's Root, Son, and Offspring,^{4.} and the 1654 London Confession plainly says, "God sent forth his Son made of a woman." The fact that no Confession of either group of Baptists uses the term "Trinity" can perhaps be accounted for by the non-biblical character of the word, but the failure of General Baptist Confessions to define God as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost is truly remarkable. We know that the question of the manner of Christ's Incarnation singularly fascinated the minds of some General Baptists, and that there were several christological views tolerated in the General Baptist fellowship; but,^{5.} the view of the great majority seems to have been orthodox.

Again, Mennonites and General Baptists agreed in saying that in the Fall man lost the divine image, holiness, and immortality, but not the faculty of receiving or rejecting good.^{6.} Man's capacity to choose was left inviolate; nor could any man suffer eternal punishment for Adam's sin. Therefore, both said, "Infants are saved without baptism through the merit of Christ"^{7.} "Original Sin" they held was a doctrine both unscriptural and unnecessary, and so it found no place in their Confessions. Both insisted that while man

1. Viner, Confessions of Christendom, p. 126.

2. Dosker, The Dutch Anabaptists, pp. 150 ff.

3. The Embden Colloquium and the Hoorns. Confession.

4. Article 3, Whitley, Minutes of the General Assembly, p. 11, Vol. 1.

5. Vid. Article 10, Confession of 1660, Whitley, Ibid., p. 14.

6. Viner, supra., p. 97.

7. Viner, supra., p. 261.

is free to accept or reject the good offered by God, he is totally unable himself to will or produce in himself good.^{1.} Both glorified the Christian life.^{2.} Dosker remarks that the Anabaptists were "drunk with life,"-- so much so, indeed, that they were always depreciating doctrine and emphasizing the Christian life. The General Baptists were definitely in this tradition, as their Confession of 1660 shows. Did that tradition affect their view of Justification as it did that of many Mennonites? The single definition of Justification which occurs in the General Baptist Confessions would seem to indicate that it did not; yet, the statement that those who have come to believe in and trust themselves to the Lord "are justified from all their sins; their faith shall be accounted for righteousness," might allow the medicinal view of the Mennonites that justification is acquired through a life of justifying faith, though by the grace of God and the operation of the Holy Spirit.^{3.} On the defectibility of justification, both Baptist and Mennonite Confessions were silent; on a general atonement, there was full agreement between them.

General Baptists and Mennonites had peculiar agreement on their conception of the Church (Unlike Separatists and Particular Baptists, they spoke of their churches as constituting "the Church."), on the baptism of believers only, on liberty of conscience (and separation of Church and State), on the voluntary connectional relationship of churches, on a Zwinglian view of the Supper, on matters of discipline, on church officers (including Messengers), on the use of "gifts" in

1. Cp. Mennonite view, Viner, op. cit., p. 157, and views of the Confessions of 1651 and 1660.

2. Op. cit., pp. 150 ff.

3. Viner, op. cit., p. 194.

the church, and on preaching to "the world." On questions concerning the Christian's use of oaths and the sword, the two groups mainly differed, but the usual silence of General Baptist Confessions of the Commonwealth Period on those matters often indicates difference of opinion within General Baptist ranks.

B. The Connections of Particular Baptists and Calvinistic Separatism

Particular Baptist and Separatist accord on theological outlook is quite as striking as the agreement of General Baptists and Mennonites. Common to the former groups were the definitely Calvinistic views of consequences of the Fall, of Election, of a particular Atonement, of Providence, and of Perseverance. If the Western Association Confession (which alone is explicit on this point) is representative, then Particular Baptists shared the forensic view of Justification with the Separatists. Likewise, the two groups were ever concerned with the local church, and never stressed the definition of the Church in the continental Reformed sense. Beyond this point, Particular Baptists and Separatists often differed, on the constitution of the Church, the Ordinances, church officers, discipline, religious freedom, and a lay ministry. However, even on these points there is sometimes evidence of a tradition which is slightly different from the Mennonite-General Baptist succession.

C. The Fusion of Streams of Thought in the Baptists

When speaking of these two traditions in Baptist life it must be noted that they were not isolated, or even independent traditions. There are emphases in the General Baptist Confessions which agree

with Calvinistic Separatism, and certainly there are many emphases in the Particular Baptist Confessions which agree only with Menno-nite or General Baptist ideas and practices. In the first instance, there is a progressive re-setting of the General Baptists' Arminianism into a Calvinistic framework. This is not surprising, for it has been noted that in the Confession of the first General Baptist Church there are clear evidences that its author or authors had come from a Calvinistic environment. In speaking of the extent of the Fall, for example, the Confession goes beyond any Arminianism in declaring that man's disposition to good was utterly replaced by disposition to evil. In the Commonwealth Period some General Baptist statements sound even more Calvinistic. The 1660 Confession even declares, it will be remembered, that ungodly men "were of old ordained to condemnation." In the second instance, it is patent that the Particular Baptists did not get from Separatism their definition of the Church, their understanding of baptism, their conviction about liberty of conscience, or their determination that the Gospel should be preached to all. Unless these ideas were in each case original (which is quite unlikely), they came from the General Baptist tradition.

2. As Primary Sources for the Study of Baptist History, 1640-1660

The period of Baptist history which is particularly illuminated by the Confessions is, of course, that between 1640 and 1660. By inference and by direct disclosure, many interesting facts are pointed out, but the most important concern the following subjects.

A. Baptist Political Interests and Positions

Reference has already been made concerning the extent of Baptist renunciation of the negative Anabaptist practice of withdrawing from the affairs of the State. No section of the Baptist community in Britain thought of government as an evil thing, or of the Christian's participation in government as being inconsistent with his faith, but all sections held that the righteousness and necessity of government stood on the highest possible plane, -- it was ordained of God. Nearly every Confession of the period declared the regard of this people for magistracy and evidenced a sincere patriotism. The Preface of the 1646 Edition of the Confession of 1644 declared that one of the principle desires of its authors was to live for "our country's good." It was more than expediency that led the Particular Baptists in that Confession to acknowledge the authority of king and parliament, "freely chosen by the kingdom," and to bind themselves "to defend both the persons of those thus chosen, and all civil laws made by them, with our persons, liberties, and estates, with all that is called ours."¹ As for the General Baptists, it will be recalled that the purpose of the return of their first members to England had been conceived in patriotic terms, namely, that their first duty in connection with the fresh truth which had broken through to them was toward their own country.

Furthermore, the Confessions convey a sense of urgency felt by Baptists of the period, as if there were a consciousness of the significance of the days through which Baptists were passing. This

1. Article 49 (1644), Underhill, op. cit., p. 46.

feeling found expression in statements of remarkable boldness, beginning with the 1646 Particular Baptist address to Parliament (at the submission of the Confession):

'We take no thought for ourselves, for the Lord our God is all-sufficient; but we desire and pray that you may do nothing against Christ, neither in his members, nor in his ordinances, that there may be no wrath upon you from the Lord....' 1.

A strong sense of urgency, the inspiration of which was not simply fear, led the same London group to declare its appreciation for the work of the King and Parliament in throwing down "the tyranny and oppression of the prelatical hierarchy," and its petition for a continuing liberty that it might have "some breathing time."² Standing on the threshold of a new day of opportunity, which even a fair measure of toleration seemed to promise, the Baptists resolved to make a supreme effort, though it involved risking all. This is the explanation of the unrelenting campaign of General and Particular Baptists for liberty of conscience for all. Did they have precedent for putting a demand for liberty of conscience in a confession of faith? It mattered not. This was part of their widespread campaign to write a principle into the life of the land. As exposition of this principle, they usually listed alongside their statement concerning religious liberty a disclaimer that such a doctrine implied license and a fresh assertion of the duty of Christians to be obedient to magistracy in all secular affairs. To the last they were holding up to public view the twofold duty of government: to occupy its proper

1. Underhill, op. cit., p. 14.

2. Article 50, Confession of 1644, Underhill, op. cit., p. 47.

sphere and to leave religion alone in its companion sphere. But by that time the day of opportunity was far spent.

What, according to the Confessions, was the Baptist political program in the period? Louise Brown says,

"As far as the Baptists, as Baptists, had a political program it was based upon advocacy of the principles of liberty of conscience and voluntaryism in religion, and they showed a willingness to accede to any form of government which gave promise of maintaining these principles." 1.

The Confessions furnish convincing corroboration of this testimony, and they go on to show -- as Miss. Brown also later affirms -- that the Baptists saw in monarchy, whether its continuation or its restoration, the denial of their most cherished principles. They were republicans by principle, and most of them held to the pronounced hope of the establishment of a republic in England. Their theory of the origin of the State seems to have been that of the Social Contract in its mildest form; their view of sovereignty, that it resides in the will of the people, not in that of the prince or even
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of parliament.

As long as the King was on his throne, Baptists would honor his office, as the 1644 Confession shows; but when he had been overthrown, with how much enthusiasm they greeted the new order. The statement honoring the King and Parliament was omitted when the 1644 Confession was edited anew in 1651 and new words were added, to the effect "That we have great cause to bless God and to be thankful for the peace and liberty we enjoy in the service of God under the present

1. Op. cit., p. 203.

2. For a full discussion of this vid. Ellis, J.F., "Baptist Political Thought of the Seventeenth Century," The Chronicle, April, 1939, pp. 73-74.

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government...." Many Baptists had fought under Cromwell and so knew a personal sense of allegiance to his government. Moreover, Cromwell's championship of the cause of liberty of conscience won him much Baptist support. The Confession of 1651 shows, however, that its authors were more concerned about the kind of government than with the contemporary governor or governors. The group supporting this Confession spoke out in favor of a government "determined in a just parliamentary way," and declared with surprising boldness for a General Baptist group of 1651 its determination "to vindicate such a Magistracy" with "Estates and Lives."²

The Confessions of 1654 and 1655 scarcely touch upon political subjects, but those of 1656 and 1660 were cast in more exciting times, and their political outlook is of interest. Especially important is the fact that the three Confessions of 1656 and 1660, at least by implication, disowned the Fifth-Monarchy Movement. The Fifth-Monarchists were by 1656 making a determined bid for Baptist support, but they made little progress among these groups which represented areas as widely scattered as Somerset, London, and Wales. We know the General Assembly of 1654 expressly repudiated the movement:

'Nor do they [representatives of the Baptized churches] know any ground for the saints, as such, to expect that the Rule and Government of the World should be put into their hands, untill that day in which the Lord Jesus shall visibly descend from Heaven in power and great glory....' ³

The Confessions of 1656 bear out other testimony concerning the

1. Underhill, op. cit., p. 45 fn.

2. Postscript Article

3. Whitley, Minutes of the General Assembly, p. 3, Vol. 1.

attitude of Baptists toward the Protectorate at an important stage. These Confessions, like certain messages of loyalty to Cromwell which came from Baptist groups in several parts of England in 1656, were valuable to the Protector at a time when Royalists, Commonwealth's Men, and Levellers were attacking him simultaneously. The Confession of the Myles group in Wales was remarkably extravagant in its praise of the Government, and said pointedly that "Contempt of magistracy is a sin of the last times...."¹ Particular Baptist churches of South Wales and Monmouthshire, disregarding the opposing influence of their leading spirit, Vavasor Powell, expressed their approval of the Government in 1656.² The attitude of most Baptists toward the Protectorate is reflected in the Confessions of that year, and is summarised in the words of Louise Brown as follows:

"It appears, then, that the leading Baptists in England, while disbelieving on principle in a government which maintained a church establishment by means of tithes, and exercised a supervision over its ministry, yet considered such government preferable to anarchy, and found it not inconsistent with their consciences to recognize it."³

The moderate course taken by the majority of Baptists certainly owed something to the work of a few strong leaders like Henry Lawrence, Samuel Richardson, and William Kiffin, who were consistent defenders of the Protectorate. These men, moreover, exercised a restraining influence, from without, on the Fifth-Monarchy movement.

The Confessions of the period thus give the clearest available statements of the ideals of their subscribers on which the political program of the Baptists was founded. Here and there they also offer

1. An Antidote against the Infection of the Times, p. 31.

2. Brown, l. op. cit., pp. 202-203.

3. Ibid., p. 58.

insights into the reactions of Baptists to some of the larger events of the time. In the Confessions themselves one senses the tension between two contending and compelling forces in Baptist life in the years 1640-1660: the necessity of proving the sanity, patriotism, and worth of the Baptist movement by an orderly acceptance of the social and political situation in which the Baptists found themselves, and the necessity of establishing for the future some lofty principles through revolutionary political action. The Confessions indicate that the Baptists would not accept life as it was, and that they probably could not make it as they declared it should be. By the persistence of their efforts, however, the Baptists were able to leave an indelible impression on a period which to them was an early golden age.

B. The Seriousness of the Quaker Threat to Baptist Life

More clearly than any other sources, the Confessions show the seriousness with which the Baptists viewed the Quaker movement. They bear testimony to the statement that in the Commonwealth Period the most formidable problem faced by Baptists was the Quaker challenge. The "gathered churches" suffered little from State opposition once the Commonwealth was established; and Baptists were able quickly to consolidate their forces and work out a satisfactory defense against many ecclesiastical opponents. But the Quakers offered them an entirely new set of problems which often rendered a frontal defense ineffective.

There were some obvious reasons for this situation. To begin with, a major emphasis of both Baptists and Quakers was the necessity

of an inward spiritual experience. The kinship of origins of the two groups has already been indicated. Baptists were dedicated to the task of leading men into a new relationship with God and of founding churches of those who had had this vitalizing experience of grace. It seemed to them that the Quakers, when they first appeared, had been taken by the same mighty truth as they. It did not at first appear that the Quakers intended to form a separate religious body. Rather, it seemed that they, being profoundly impressed by the formalism and deadness of so much of the religion of the nation, proposed to call men to personal repentance and striving after truth, and so to join forces with the Baptists in stressing a long-neglected essential of the Gospel. Baptists welcomed such preachers of the necessity of inward religious experience. These prophets, it was felt, could not but contribute to the diffusion of the great Baptist emphasis on the immediate leadership of Christ in His Church.

Beyond this, however, it must be noted that the Baptists were peculiarly susceptible to the Quaker message. Had they not pledged themselves to an unending search for more of the truth which God would pour forth? In the 1644 Confession they had declared that "we know but in part, and that we are ignorant of many things which we desire and seek to know." They were seekers, and theirs was a day of spiritual longing and discovery. The Quakers came as teachers of fresh truth and possessors of a new illumination. They were often received as "Friends" indeed.

Even when it was discovered that the churches were suffering as result of the Quakers' work, there was not much that could be done

to prevent them because of the lack of organization among Baptist churches. The movement toward association was hastened, but before association was effected, in most cases, the great initial Quaker impact had been made on the communities. It is remarkable, however, that the section of Baptists which had the better general organization, the General Baptists, lost more heavily to the Quakers. This does not annul the factor of ineffective organization; other factors were involved in the defection of General Baptists.

Another factor which helps explain the susceptibility of the Baptists was their doctrinal immaturity. That is not to say that the leaders who prepared the Confessions were doctrinally immature, but many members of the mushrooming Baptist communities must have been. There were many interested learners, who were only on their way into the rapidly expanding fellowship, who fell easy victims to the Quaker propaganda. The defection from this group was a chief reason for the publication of a new edition of the Confession of 1644 in 1651.^{1.}

Perhaps not many Baptists had joined the Quaker movement by 1651. The great concern of those who edited the London Confession that year was not that so many had deserted the Baptist cause, or even that the desertion of many was threatened -- though they re-^{2.}marked that thousands of souls were in danger -- but that many outsiders were saying that most Baptists had moved on the Quakerism, and that this movement was natural if not inevitable for Baptists !

1. Vid "Epistle to Reader."

2. Heart Bleedings . . ., Underhill, op. cit., p. 309.

Such, the authors said, was a gross misstatement. In spite of the close relationship of some Quaker and Baptist emphases, and of many Baptists and early Quakers, Baptists felt the strongest antipathy to some of the distinctive Quaker teachings. The authors denied they were being uncharitable in criticizing the Quakers, for it is "not the part of charity," they said, "to sooth any in their sins." By keeping silent the Baptists felt they would be guilty of the blood of the Quakers.¹ Responding to requests from their churches in many parts of the country that definite defensive action be taken before it was too late, the London leaders listed some fifteen Quaker "errors" in Heart Bleedings for Professors Abominations.

The 1651 General Baptist Confession did not mention the Quakers by name, but there is no doubt that it was intended as a defense against them. While it is easy mistakenly to read an anti-Quaker meaning into an article, it seems safe to conclude that no less than eight articles of the Confession were worded with a view to Quaker teachings or Quakers themselves. Prominent are the strong words used against the refusal of Ordinances, and the provision of a court to which doctrinal controversies of local churches might be appealed.

The Confessions of 1654 and 1656 acquaint us with the assaults of Quakers on three widely scattered Baptist groups. Naturally they speak out plainly against Quaker teachings and attempt to build a doctrinal defense against them. The 1654 authors, in the pamphlet accompanying their Confession, listed five specific Quaker errors, and declared that Quakers are actually haters and enemies of the light of

1. Heart Bleedings . . ., Underhill, op. cit., p. 309.

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the Gospel. The "Dedictory Epistle" of the Somerset Confession spoke of "the great departing from the faith, and that under glorious notions of spiritualness and holiness," and besought sister churches in the nation to "be not soon moved from the hope of the Gospel." This Confession itself points out five Quaker teachings by stressing contrary emphases in as many articles. The Myles group in Wales faced the old accusation that Baptists were "promoters of Quakers," and pointed out the danger to "the whole doctrine and profession of Christ,"^{2.} before going on to name some fourteen specific Quaker errors. These Confessions best show the deliberate reaction of Baptists to the initial impact of the Quakers on their life. The Confession of 1660 was concerned with other dangers, but it is not to be supposed that its supporters were at all forgetful of the Quakers. How could they be when their great leader, Samuel Fisher, and other important General Baptists had gone over to the Quakers, along with whole churches?

What were the offensive doctrines which the Baptists accused the Quakers of preaching? From the Confessions and the pamphlets which were published as their companions the following have been taken:

1. Christ's death is parabolic, a mere shadow.
2. The Scriptures are but "a dead letter." Instead of them, there is an infallible spirit of God in all who come into the world. New Testament teachings are figurative.
3. The Ordinances are fleshly forms and of no use. Christians are above them.
4. God, Christ, and the Word are entirely within.

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1. "To the Reader in behalf of the Author."
 2. "To the Reader"

5. Perfectionism. "Sinful, frail men ... affect an equality with the infinite God," as just, holy, and good as God.
6. Man's soul is uncreated, so he is equal with God.
7. The fleshly "clothing" of the soul is Christ.
8. Justification is sought by one's inherent holiness. Faith is a fleshly form.
9. The Second Advent is a false idea.
10. Antinomianism. There is no sin but that which contradicts a man's own light.
11. There is no Heaven or Hell, except that torment men sustain through crossing their own light.
12. Created Angels or Spirits are denied.

These teachings appeared a formidable attack indeed on Puritan orthodoxy. The Quakers seemed to be challenging the central doctrines of historic Christianity. But, how accurately did the Baptist leaders understand the Quaker message? Had they permitted prejudice to impair their powers of judgment? Without going into these questions, something may be said from both the Quaker and the Baptist points of view. The Quaker preachers were as varied in type as imaginable. They preached no simple uniform doctrine, and by no single method. Their terminology and approach were strange, and their message was often misunderstood. At any rate, the Baptists felt they were meeting a ruthless enemy and that their backs were against the wall. They had been less than human had they painted Quaker doctrines in a favorable light. Whatever central emphases belonged to the Quaker message, it must be said that the Baptists of the Confessions understood many details of that message to be full of error and contradictory to the Christian Gospel.

C. Baptist Leadership

The Welsh Confessions bear no signatures, though we know that of John Myles represented eight churches. On the other hand, no

less than one hundred and eighty-six names are signed to the six English Confessions. Without a doubt, some of these names belonged to the principle leaders of the Baptist cause in the period. On the whole, Particular Baptist leadership was far superior to that of the General Baptists. Outstanding among Particular Baptists were William Kiffin, John Spilsbury, Samuel Richardson, and Hanserd Knollys. Kiffin and Richardson held important public posts and were men of extraordinary ability; Kiffin and Knollys were wealthy merchants.¹ Knollys, an ex-clergyman who was noted for his learning, was the author of a Hebrew grammar and many other works.² To these should be added the name of Edward Harrison, another ex-clergyman. In the Midlands the Particular Baptists had a capable leader in Daniel King, and in the West was the dynamic Thomas Collier. If the greatest leader of this section of the Baptists had to be named, it would probably be Kiffin. Macauley says of him that '... for half a century he was the first man of the Baptist denomination.'³ The mediocrity of General Baptist leadership is indicated in the fact that in the array of sixty names signed to the Midland Confession of 1651 hardly one stands out. By 1660 the outstanding names connected with the General Assembly seem to have been those of Joseph Wright of Maidstone, William Jeffery of Kent, and Francis Smith of London. These were capable and diligent men, but without much education, influence in public affairs, or brilliant ability. Then there was John Griffith who was important in a limited London circle.

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1. Kiffin in 1652 gained privileges by furnishing requisites for the English fleet. Vid Dict. National Biography, Vol. 31, pp. 98-100.
 2. Vid. Whitley, A Baptist Bibliography.
 3. Quoted in Cathcart, Baptist Encyclopedia.

It will be noted that a few well known Baptist names do not appear with any Confession of the period. On the Particular Baptist side are Henry Jessey of London, John Bunyan of Bedford, and John Tombes of the West Midlands.^{1.} Why were these men left out? In a word, because they were not thought to be at the center of the movement. They held to the principle of open-membership which the Confession churches rejected. John Tombes, in particular, was never considered quite in line with the Baptists, though he rendered them^{2.} important service, and later he became a Presbyterian. On the General Baptist side an outstanding name which is conspicuous by its absence is that of Henry Denne, the busy home-missionary. He was an ex-clergyman whose semi-Quakerism and professed Arminian theology the General Baptists never completely trusted. The case of Thomas Lamb and Edward Barber, leaders of the original Church in London, offers a problem. Why did neither of them sign the 1660 Confession? Was it, as has been suggested, because they objected to the doctrine of Laying on Hands, or because theologically they did not agree with the Assembly churches?^{3.} There is less difficulty about such leaders as Chillenden, D'Anvers, Oates, Tillam, and Chamberlen, who represented special groups of Baptists, Military and Seventh-Day. Vavasor Powell, head of the Welsh itinerants, and the most important Baptist in Wales after 1655, did not accept the closed-membership practice, and thus he would have no part in the Confession of the Myles group.

1. It might be noted that not one of Cromwell's Baptist "Tryers" signed a Confession. The three pastors among them were open-communionists and ex-clergymen.

2. Whitley, A Baptist Bibliography, p. 229.

3. Vid., ibid., p. 233.

D. Variety and Freedom in the Early Baptist Movement

Before the end of the Commonwealth Period there were four distinct types of Baptists in England. These were the General Baptists who stemmed from the Helwys Church of 1611, the Particular Baptists who were Calvinistic in theology, Open-Membership Baptists (also Calvinistic) who continued to fraternize in their churches with Independent paedobaptists, and Seventh-Day Baptists whose small ranks had been largely recruited from the collapse of the Fifth-Monarchy Movement and who were either Calvinistic or Arminian in theology. The Confessions represent only the two larger groups (the first two here named); but they indicate that variety among Baptists went far beyond even four sections of the larger community. The outlook of the Griffith group in London, for example, was not that of the Mid-^{1.}land General Baptists. Whitley says the General Baptist expansion radiated from two sets of centers, the five churches which sprang into being as result of Smyth's labors, and the old Lollard district of Buckinghamshire and Berkshire, especially around Chesham. It is possible to see differing strains of Anabaptist and Lollard emphasis among the General Baptists of London alone. Certainly there were important differences of practice between the subscribers of the Confession of 1651 and those of the Confession of 1654. Before the end of the century, General Baptists from the Lollard territory were noted for their orthodoxy; others in London and elsewhere, for their unorthodoxy.

Particular Baptist groups differed from one another too. The

1. Minutes of the General Assembly, p. xlix, Vol. 1.

theology of the Somerset churches was not quite that of the London churches, however much they were supposed to be in agreement. The Confessions show that in such matters as footwashing, unction for the sick, the taking of oaths, the bearing of arms, and the use of Messengers, personal and local differences were allowed by most churches of both General and Particular Baptists. On these subjects the Confessions were silent. Only the Griffith group showed a consistently precisionist spirit. The main Baptist groups were more interested in announcing and applying principles than in prescribing forms. Each knew that within its fellowship there were differences of outlook and practice and so sought to allow freedom for these differences.

E. The Attitude of Baptists toward Other Christian Groups

The first General Baptist Church did not deny the name Christian to individuals outside its fellowship nor to other churches. It did declare that paedobaptist churches were wrongly constituted: "... churches constituted after any other manner [than the baptism of believers], or of any other persons, are not according to Christ's testament." However, partly on the strength of this belief, General Baptist isolation became increasingly a fact, and an exclusive stand regarding fellowship with other Christian groups was taken. Movement in this direction was not surprising. General Baptists did not have so close a kinship with Independents as did their Particular brethren, who faced a real problem in thinking of closing their doors to paedobaptist Christians. A more important explanation of General Baptist

isolation lay in the fact that the theology of the group was a barrier between themselves and the Independent and Presbyterian groups. If they could not accept the Calvinism of their time, neither could they bridge the chasm between themselves and the only other Arminians at hand, Anglicans and Quakers. The 1651 Confession made no mention of other Christian groups, but the London Confession of 1654 laid down two rules. One was, "That all ought to avoid the hearing of any Teachers so as to learn of them, except believers dipped....," and the other, which later was to prove harmful to General Baptist growth, prohibited the "making of marriages with any out of the Church"(i.e., with any not General Baptists). The Confession of 1660 indicated the narrowed outlook of many General Baptists by that year when its authors stated that all Christian bodies which do not insist on a regenerate church membership, "we utterly deny, forasmuch as we are commanded to 'have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness...'. "

No Particular Baptist Confession of the period mentions other Christian groups except, of course, the Quakers. There were no attacks on paedobaptists; and we know from other sources that Particular Baptists and Independents enjoyed very cordial relations. Repeatedly they united in issuing pamphlets and in other fraternal acts. Nor did the Baptists limit their fellowship to Independents. The story of the effort of Richard Baxter, in 1659, to effect a union of Presbyterians, Independents, and Baptists is evidence of that fact, especially when it reveals that some Baptists showed

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considerable interest in the effort.

One is forced to the conclusion that while General Baptists thought it expedient to isolate themselves from other Christian groups, and Particular Baptists persistently sought fellowship with other Christian groups, neither group would deny a larger fellowship of all believers nor the name Christian to any who followed Christ. They, like the continental Anabaptists, have been accused of denying both; but, with the Anabaptist, Pilgrim Marbeck, they would have said,

'It is not true that we refuse to count as Christians those who disagree with our baptism and reckon them as misguided spirits and deniers of Christ. It is not ours either to judge or condemn him who is not baptized according to the command of Christ.' 2.

It was the Baptists' sense of obligation to obey Christ, and not the desire to label anyone else a heretic, which drove them to separate from other Christians. Their mighty plea that all the commands of Christ be obeyed seemed legalistic to some (especially the Quakers), but it was based upon the eternal principle of the immediate and absolute lordship of Christ. That principle took hold of them as it had taken hold of Wycliff nearly two hundred years earlier. It also enabled them to see that every Christian was free to obey the will of Christ as it was revealed to him.

F. Signs Prophetic of General Baptist Decline

Some root causes of the decline of General Baptists which was to come later in the century are to be seen in the General Baptist Confessions. Chief among these are the following:

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1. Vid. Powicke, F.T., "Richard Baxter's Relation to the Baptists," in Transactions Baptist Hist. Soc., Vol. 6, pp. 214-215.
 2. Smithson, The Anabaptists, p. 127.

1. The indefiniteness and diversity of theological outlook.
2. The center of General Baptist strength was rural. Unlike the Particular Baptists, London did not furnish them a dynamic and unifying center.
3. General Baptist leadership was mediocre. There were few well educated leaders.
4. The prohibition of mixed marriages.
5. The negative outlook toward a larger Christian fellowship.

G. Social Conditions among Baptists

A General Baptist Confession usually had an Article on Relief of the Poor Brethren. This was not simply an effort to conform in another detail to the pattern of the apostolic Church, not just another inheritance from Mennonite practice; it was a matter of grim necessity. Most Baptists were poor men and, more than that, poor men of the villages. Especially were the General Baptists a rural group. And it was in the country districts that conditions were worst. The period was a time of land-hunger; land prices were being pushed up; rents were rising; tenants were being pushed out; the poor were becoming poorer. What were dispossessed countrymen to do when they had lost their land-birthright? Many, of course, emigrated; but many could not emigrate. Some turned Levellers, or joined the Diggers.^{1.} Undoubtedly, however, economic conditions contributed to Baptist growth. The State Church was identified by the poor with the squire (and the government) who had dispossessed them. The discontent of

1. Gerrard Winstanley, leader of the Diggers (a movement aimed at making the earth "a common treasury of livelihood to whole mankind, without respect of persons"), was a Baptist. Vid. "Gerrard Winstanley - An Unknown Baptist," The Chronicle, July, 1946, pp. 137-143.

the poor found expression in Dissenting life, and nowhere more than in the group which disbelieved on principle in an autocracy and a State Church, -- the Baptists. If these conditions meant more men for the Baptist cause, they also meant more poor men in need of help. If one church could not take care of the great problem of relieving the necessities of its poor brethren, then other churches must be asked to help. At least the churches benefited by being drawn more closely to one another by this ministry.

3. A~~S~~ Primary Sources for the Study of Early Baptist Doctrine

The greatest interest of the Confessions naturally concerns the doctrinal emphases of the Baptists in the period. The main historical importance of these emphases lies in the fact that they may be said to characterize the first half-century of Baptist life. It will be necessary, before reviewing the many doctrines on which they agreed, to examine the distinctive theological outlook of each of the great sections of Baptists, General and Particular.

A. A Comparison of General and Particular Baptist Theological Outlook

Here two streams have been noted, the Particular Baptist being Calvinistic, the General Baptist, Arminian. The Calvinism of the former is mild; the Arminianism of the latter is never thoroughgoing. A Calvinistic setting or framework is common to both. Like the Particular Baptist Confession of 1611, two of the General Baptist Confessions attempt to define Election. One of them identifies it with the act of believing, as to time, and with the purpose of God toward

believers, as to eternity.^{1.} The Standard Confession, however, goes the length of saying that "God hath even before 'the foundation of the world chosen' (or elected) 'to eternal life, such as believe'," and ordained the condemnation of ungodly men. One of the other General Baptist Confessions² is satisfied to substitute an Article on God's Foreknowledge, and yet another^{3.} ignores both Election and Foreknowledge. The Particular Baptist Confessions invariably pronounce for an absolute Election and are silent on the subject of Reprobation. Clearly, some General Baptist statements go further toward the Calvinistic view of Election than did the Confession of 1611.

On Results of the Fall, the Particular Confessions stand with the 1611 Helwys statement that "men are by nature children of wrath, born in iniquity ... having all disposition unto evil." The Somerset Confession, however, was content to speak of man's resulting "undone estate." Some General Baptist definitions seem to limit the results of the Fall to universal physical death, but the Confession of 1660 noted, in addition, that mankind fell in Adam "into a miserable and mortal estate." All Baptists fought shy of the idea of inherited guilt, and they never used the term "original sin," as did the Westminster Confession. The Particular Baptist emphasis was rather on the inherited tendency to commit sin, while admitting that men are conceived in sin. At least the Confession of 1660 spoke for most Baptists when it protested that no one "shall suffer for 'Adams' sin, eternal punishment in Hell." So, all held that children dying in

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- 1. Confession of Welsh Arminian Baptists.
 - 2. Confession of 1654.
 - 3. Confession of 1651

infancy "are only subject to the first death." Silence or vagueness characterizes some General Baptist Confessions on the actual extent of the Fall; but evidently the effects of the Fall were not limited to physical death. Like John Smyth, these men held that Christ has stopped the "passage" of sin from father to son.

On the extent of the Atonement, Particular and General disagreement was, of course, unanimous. It was disagreement on this point, more than anything else, which kept the two groups of Baptists apart. The Particular Baptists held that Christ died for the Elect; the contrary doctrine seemed to them to mean that "God has given power to all men to believe to salvation," an assertion which appeared to belie daily observation. The General Baptists contended, as strongly, that Christ died for every man; to deny that any individual might not believe seemed to them to cut the nerve of the whole Gospel-witness.

Particular Baptists had a strong doctrine of Perseverance; General Baptists offered only a substitute one. The first insisted that those who have believed will invariably be kept; the second, that those who persevere in faithfulness will be kept through God's enduing them with powers of obeying Him, but believers may fall away and be lost. Particular Baptist Confessions usually had an Article on Providence, but their counterparts from the other group are sought in vain.

General and Particular Baptist definitions of Justification agree that it is always the work of God "without any relation to work

done by themselves," but from the human side it is only on the basis of faith.¹ Likewise, Sanctification is held to be bestowed "from above." Is grace irresistible? The Particular Baptist Confessions do not answer explicitly; the General Baptist Confessions deny it.

Certainly, General Baptists were more conscious of man's freedom, although heatedly denying the doctrine of "Free-will" which suggested to them blasphemous humanism. The General Baptists were the theological liberals of the day, in spite of the precision of their church practice. They often chose to quote Scripture in defining theological positions, leaving the individual to interpret as he would. Thus they lacked something of the theological definiteness of their Calvinistic brethren.

It may seem unwise, in view of the variety of outlook to be found during the period among Baptists of different sections of the country, to speak of Baptist theological trends of the twenty years, 1540-1560. There is, however, other evidence which corroborates certain testimony of the Confessions. The General Baptist Confessions indicate that a General Baptist shift toward Calvinism was underway. The Confession of 1560 approaches Calvinism at several points, advancing over the three preceding General Baptist Confessions in that direction. This is not surprising, for General Baptists were living in a strongly Calvinistic environment. The great Westminster Confession had been approved by Parliament in 1548, had won immediate acclaim in Scotland and much of England, and was generally regarded

1. Vid. Confession of 1556.

by Calvinists as a model statement of their beliefs. While it cannot be shown that this Confession exercised great direct influence on the Baptist Confessions of the Commonwealth Period, it did have such an influence on later Baptist Confessions. It went far toward shaping English theological thought generally even before 1660. As^{1.} Dakin remarks, it was one of the factors contributing to the production of a fairly uniform Calvinistic theological background to the common English mind of the seventeenth century. Evidence that the Calvinistic trend was influencing the General Baptists is the fact that at least four of their able ministers, Benjamin Keach of Winslow, Richard Allen of White's Alley, London, Mark Key of London, and Richard Adams of Mount Sorrel, became Particular Baptists not long after 1660 and attempted to lead General Baptist churches to follow their example.^{2.} There was no corresponding shift of Particular Baptist leaders to the General Baptist position. Moreover, the next General Baptist Confession to appear^{3.} read even more like a Calvinistic statement than the Confession of 1660. At least the important right wing of the General Baptist group was infected with Calvinism.

On the other hand, a softening of Calvinism took place in the Particular Baptist group throughout the period. The great reason for this was the necessity of providing a rationale for missionary and evangelistic effort.^{4.} When Walton says that "After 1644 most Baptists accepted a rigid form of the doctrine of Predestination and hoped

1. Calvinism, p. 174.

2. Vid. Whitley, The Baptists of London, pp. 118-119. Isaac Lamb, son of the pastor of the original General Baptist Church, also became, by 1676, a Particular Baptist minister.

3. The Orthodox Confession of 1678.

4. The Gathered Community, p. 70.

and expected that they were among the Elect," he must have had special reference to a period later than 1660. If these words be applied to the years 1644-1660, they are obviously incorrect. Not only did nearly half of the Baptists belong to the General branch, which never accepted Calvinistic views of Predestination, but the members of the more prominent Particular branch were refusing a rigid Calvinism. It does appear that some London Particular Baptists held a stronger form of Calvinism than did any other Baptists, but their Calvinism was quite moderate. The 1646 Edition of their Confession represented a strengthening of that doctrine, but the stronger views of the Cox Appendix did not win acceptance, and later editions of the Confession showed a movement back to more moderately Calvinistic views. The Somerset Confession offered still more moderate views, and the Welsh Particular Baptists under Myles did not hesitate to omit some points of Calvinistic emphasis from their Confession when it suited their purpose to do so.

Thus, General and Particular Baptists gradually moved closer together as the period progressed. We hear of one London Church, Paul's Alley, which not long after the period refused to take sides on the controversial question of a general or particular election, and prevented its ministers from preaching for or against Calvinism.^{1.} The partially successful effort of Thomas Collier of uniting Particular and General Baptists in the West has already been noted. It is, therefore, not surprising that in 1661, following Venner's rebellion in London, Particular and General Baptists joined hands in

1. Vid. "Variation among the Early Baptists," The Chronicle, April, 1946, pp. 66-67, and Whitley, Minutes General Assembly, p.1111, Vol.1.

issuing their first important common defense: The Humble Apology of some commonly called Anabaptists....^{1.}

B. The Scriptures

Beginning at this point, Baptist doctrine becomes a single stream. The Confessions prove that the name Baptist alone is sufficient to cover the thinking of the several types of Baptists once the theological outlook has been considered separately. There are only minor differences of emphasis, which will be noted.

The Confessions speak with one voice about the Scriptures, and show that the Baptists did not deviate from the position taken by a London group in 1653 when it said it was determined 'not to receive or practice any piece of positive worship that had no precept or example in the word of God.'^{2.} Perhaps the best statement of all on the Scriptures comes from one of the briefest of the Confessions, that of 1655:

"We profess and believe the Holy Scriptures, the Old and New Testament, to be the word and revealed mind of God, which are able to make men wise unto Salvation through faith and love which is in Christ Jesus; and that they are given by inspiration of God, serving to furnish the man of God for every good work; and by them we are ... to try all things whatsoever are brought to us, under the pretense of truth."

As the backgrounds of this particular statement show, it was this persuasion which kept Baptists from turning in far greater numbers to Quakerism. No article of a Confession could pretend to stand unless it rested upon several plain scriptural supports, so the Confessions have multiple Scripture references. The New Testament

1. Whitley, A Baptist Bibliography, p. 81.

2. Quoted in Carlile, The Story of the English Baptists, p. 15.

references were considered of greater weight than those of the Old Testament, especially in matters pertaining to the Church, the Ordinances, and Christian practice.

C. The Church and Its Ministry

A typical Baptist definition of the Church is that of the 1544 Confession:

"... a company of visible Saints, called and separated from the world, by the word and Spirit of God, to the visible profession of the faith of the gospel, being baptized into that faith, and joyned to the Lord, and to each other, by mutuall agreement, and in the practical enjoyment of the Ordinances commanded by Christ their head and King."

The Baptist emphasis was always on the local, visible, voluntary church of the regenerate, which was in all of its members conscious of the leadership of Christ, and obedient to Him. Each part of that emphasis included a seemingly opposite correlative. The church is local, but it stands in necessary relations with other churches. The church is visible, but there is an invisible universal Church of all Saints. The church is voluntary, but membership in it is vital to Christian growth and service. The church is made up of those who have the new life of Christ within themselves, but church members are not perfect. The church is conscious of Christ's constant leadership, yet it is to engage in worship and in constant seeking after His will. The church is under the headship of Christ, but it is also autonomous, which means that power resides ultimately not in the ministry or the eldership but in the church. It also means the church is to choose its own ministry, promote fellowship, and exercise discipline among its own members. The church is, thus,

a fellowship rather than an organization; Baptists belonged to a "personal" rather than an "authoritarian" type of church.

The distinction between clergy and laity is unknown in the Confessions and was unknown among the churches they represented. Yet the early Baptist conception of the ministry was an exalted one. Whoever the minister, God had called him and the church had trained him in spiritual things and set him apart for special service. Article 5 of the 1660 Confession gives the fullest view of the early Baptist conception of the ministry. A ministerial succession is not mentioned in any Confession.

D. The Ordinances

Baptism is held to be an Ordinance of the New Testament commanded by Christ to be "dispensed upon" believers only. It is an immersing of the body (every Confession agrees) in proclamation of the identity believers have in the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, and of the certainty believers have concerning the resurrection of the body, and in testimony of the transformation which has been wrought by Christ in the conversion of the baptized. Baptism is also the door into the fellowship of believers, the visible church. Nowhere is Baptism thought of as essential to salvation or as part of the saving act. It is purely symbolic and proclamatory: "... the symbolic representation of the gathered church."^{1.}

The two Confessions which attempt to define the Supper^{2.} show their subscribers to have thought of it as a church Ordinance to be cele-

1. Walton, op. cit., p. 163.

2. Confessions of 1651 and 1654.

brated simply as a memorial of Christ.

E. Preaching and Missions

Seven of the eight Confessions emphasize the importance of preaching, which gives it extraordinary prominence. Since preaching was commanded by Christ, and since "Faith is ordinarily begotten by the preaching of the Gospel," preaching was central in the worship and essential to the conception of the church. In five Confessions the missionary obligation of a church to "the world" is set forth in most striking terms. Particular Baptists joined their General brethren in affirming that the Gospel "is to be preached to all men." There can be little doubt, too, that home missions were not the limit of these missionary ambitions. The Dutch had been doing some missionary work in the East; Roger Williams had been working among American Indians; and there was a possibility that the West Indies might be wrested from the Spaniards by English naval power. All of these areas were thought of as possible foreign mission fields. The churches were already giving their best energies to home missionary activities when the Confessions appeared. A primary purpose of churches and associations (and of the Assembly) was already seen to be the effective propagation of the Gospel. "... it is the ordinance of Christ, so it is the duty of the church..."-- so reasoned the Somerset Confession on the subject.

F. Liberty of Conscience

Liberty of conscience was urged in the strongest terms in five of the Confessions. It was clearly insisted upon as a basic human

right by all kinds of Baptists. For them it was 'an obvious spiritual necessity.'^{1.} With this belief was held the conviction that Church and State should be separate. Several Confessions boldly assert this; others only denounce "national ministers" and tithes for their support. Only the Welsh Particular Baptist Confession of 1656 undertook to defend any payment by the State of ministers of religion.

G. The Christian Life

The Baptist ideal for church members was that "...every one of them ought to be holy in life and conversation..."^{2.} Moral conduct must be based on "principles of true faith and unfeigned love, looking to God's glory as their main end." The profession and forms of godliness, in church or privately, are "of no effect" apart from true holiness. Politically, this doctrine meant the idealistic attempt to apply perfectly the principles of the Kingdom of God to every aspect of the governing of the State.

H. Eschatology

Baptists accepted a literal biblical Eschatology. Most Confessions contain brief statements on the Second Advent, a General Resurrection and Judgment, and one set forth the belief in the Reign of the Saints. There is absolutely no evidence that the people represented by the Confessions were millennial enthusiasts. They accepted without comment the events prophesied in Scripture.

1. Underwood, op. cit., p. 86 fn., quoting Jordan, Development of Religious Toleration in England, Vol. 3, p. 477.
 2. Confession of 1654.

4. Baptist Practice, 1640-1660, as Shown by the Confessions

The Confessions indicate the following practices to have belonged to the Baptists during the Commonwealth Period:

- (1) Officers of a church were chosen and ordained by a local congregation, and set apart for service only to that congregation (except in the case of Messengers).
 - (2) Officers of a Particular Baptist church were Elders (or Pastors) and Deacons; of a General Baptist church, Elders, Deacons, and Messengers. Deacons were "overseers of the poor." Messengers continued the work of the Apostles (not of the Twelve, in particular, but of such as Timothy and Titus): preaching anywhere as God gave opportunity, teaching and strengthening pastors and churches, and defending pastors against usurpers and churches against heresy. At least one Particular Baptist Association had a full-time Messenger.
 - (3) The ministry was supplied by the congregation it served with "things needful." Yet the minister was not a professional, and he usually worked with his hands for his living.
 - (4) The scriptural injunction as to discipline in the church was followed closely. When a brother was observed in a fault, he was first admonished privately; if he did not repent, he was admonished by several witnesses; if yet he did not repent, his conduct was made known to the church, which "withdrew fellowship" from him. "Tender respect" was had toward any who had been rejected, however, as long as there was hope of recover-
-

ing him. Each member "watched over" his fellows, giving guidance and warning.

- (5) Each church was responsible for the relief of its poor. At least in General Baptist circles, if one church was unable to care adequately for its needy, other churches might be called on for assistance.
- (6) Baptism was in all cases by immersion.
- (7) Probably most General Baptist churches (by 1660) practiced Laying of Hands on all believers following baptism. The practice was adopted by very few Particular Baptist churches.
- (8) All believers were encouraged to exercise their "gifts" for the edifying of others and for their own upbuilding. Every member was permitted to speak or testify, so long as the gift was exercised in an orderly manner.
- (9) The church approved any who had special gifts to preach to "the world."
- (10) The name "Baptist" had not come into general use by 1660, or certainly had won little acceptance among Baptists. The authors of three of the Confessions identified themselves as members of the churches or congregations "falsly" or "unjustly" called Anabaptists. Four Confessions purport to represent "the Churches (or Church) of Christ" (one, "the Church of Christ in Wales"). The 1651 Confession declares itself to be the statement of "Congregations gathered according to the Primitive Pattern"; whereas, the Cox Appendix to the 1644 Confession is said to speak for "Baptized Beleevers."

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IV. Modern Worth of the Confessions to Baptists

What is the value of its Confessions to a denomination which gives them no authority, which makes Confessions only to throw them aside and forget them, which gets along without Confessions today as well as it got along with them three hundred years ago? With these questions we are not immediately concerned except as they are asked with regard to the particular group of Confessions of the Civil War-Commonwealth Period. There have been prepared since the period in question, and especially in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, other Baptist Confessions of more elaborate and scholarly construction, but none are of such interest or importance as those of 1644-1660. The truth of that statement will become apparent as the permanent importance to Baptists of the Civil War-Commonwealth Confessions is indicated.

1. As Documents Illustrative of Baptist Beginnings

It is essential to the understanding of any movement that its "Apostolic Age" be thoroughly known. As Braithwaite says,

"... the Apostolic Age of a religious movement is a period of unique interest, a year's swift current carries us as far as a decade of ordinary story. The atmosphere is fresh and life-giving; the persons who have drunk of the new truth have force to mould the world to their purpose...."

Fundamental to the understanding of the "Apostolic Age" of Baptist life are the official doctrinal and practical declarations of Baptist groups in that Age. Indeed, it is difficult to see how anyone could undertake to write the story of the first half-century of the Baptists

without a thorough knowledge of the Confessions, not only of the two large groups of Baptists who met in London in 1644 and 1660, but also of the local groups which met in many parts of the country to set forth declarations of their faith. Pioneer Baptists were possessed of truths great enough to transform farmers, carters, soap-boilers, merchants, clothiers, and horse-rubbers into religious reformers of indisputable power, and London had by no means a monopoly on them. Greater than the men who possessed them or the events in which they were set forth were these truths. Only the Confessions tell us clearly what they were.

2. Keys to the Understanding of the Commonwealth Period

As has already been indicated, the years 1640-1660 were among the most significant in modern history as regards political, religious, social, and economic developments. Baptists were, in one sense, a product of that marvelously complex age; therefore modern Baptists might better understand themselves in understanding that period. Probably the Baptists have preserved the spirit and emphases of their fathers of the Commonwealth Period to a greater extent than any group descended from that day. From another point of view, Baptists helped create that age, especially in its profoundly religious spirit, and their Confessions are among the documents which best convey the spirit of the age and of the modern world.

3. As Documents of a Pioneer Christian Lay-movement

It has been noted that all six of the English Confessions were prepared and signed (in their first editions) by laymen. In Wales

one author, John Myles, was an exception, but he was a leader of lay-preachers. Here, then, are eight Confessions prepared on behalf of a vigorous religious movement numbering many thousands by men who had received no formal training for the ministry and who had little of what we today call higher education. In this respect the Confessions are probably unique in the annals of post-Reformation Christianity. In order that the Baptist movement may never be tempted to deny the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers, to doubt the worth of its lay-leadership, or to turn over its ministerial tasks to an exclusive professional class, the clergy, these Confessions might well be set as a book of reference.

4. In the Baptist Missionary Story

The Confessions demonstrate that for Baptists a modern missionary movement began with the establishment of the first Baptist churches. This is a fact which has usually been overlooked in the story of Baptist missions, but the importance of which can hardly be exaggerated.

5. In the Ecumenical Movement

Some Christians have been surprised, and some Baptists have known momentary embarrassment when, in connection with conversations relative to the modern ecumenical movement, Baptists have not been able to present a truly official statement of their position. Perhaps from the historical as well as the apologetic point of view, the Confessions of 1644-1660 can be of value in presenting the outlook of the "gathered" churches. They are no more official or au-

thoritative than a statement which any Baptist congregation or association might draw up today, but they have the virtue of belonging to the Baptist "Apostolic Age." Baptist thought has not moved far, in essential matters, from that of the early leaders.

6. As Guides to the Modern Use of Confessions

For such a non-creedal people as modern Baptists there is both warning and help concerning the use of creeds in the Confessions. There is warning in the knowledge that these Confessions are but man's poor versions of God's Word; that the truths they include are only partially and inadequately stated; that their omissions are often as notable as their contents; and that they soon lost their usefulness and were forgotten.

There is, however, help from the Confessions in that they emphasize the necessity for definiteness of faith and its expression. "Fixed principles" are never to be bartered for "a religious licentiousness in whose indiscriminate embrace the distinctive truths of the Gospel would be ignored and finally lost."¹ Truths voluntarily stated as definite propositions often become a golden vessel instead of gold in the mass. The Ordinances have been mightily used by Baptists as unvarying preachers of definite Christian truths, and so have kept Baptists an evangelical people without an authoritative confession of faith; but there are also calls to interpret in fresh words the Christian Gospel to each succeeding generation.

V. Contribution of the Confessions to Christian Thought

It might be suggested that there was very little contribution

1. Stokes, History of the Midland Association, pp. 9-11.

if any, that a group of seventeenth century Baptist laymen could make to Christian thought. That was true as regards theology. Seventeenth century Baptists were willing to stand in the Calvinistic or the Arminian traditions, or to stand somewhere between the two. Here they did not pretend to be original. On other matters of Christian doctrine they were original and they did make contributions.

1. Concerning the Position and Worth of the Individual Believer

Seventeenth century Baptists sought to carry to its logical conclusion the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers. The principle of separation from the world they shared with Independents and Anabaptists, but beside it stood the principle of absolute obedience to Christ, founded upon a personal relationship independent of the mediation of parent, priest, sacrament, or Church. Because every believer is in fellowship with Christ, they held, he delights to obey all His commands. Believers are not divided into clergy and laity; all are equal. To churchmen of the seventeenth century this sounded like simple anarchy; but it worked out into an orderly expression of Christian freedom. To Baptists "individualism in religious experience, relation and responsibility" ^{1.} was the first principle of Christian belief and practice.

2. Concerning the Nature of the Church

Perhaps it was here that the Baptists made their greatest contribution. Their prime concern was the establishment of a pure church. Here again they were thorough; they were the extremists of Separatism and Separatists by principle. Without cutting off

1. Carver, W.O., "The Baptist Conception of the Church," The Chronicle, January, 1947, pp. 1-3.

from the past as completely as the Anabaptists had done, they, nevertheless, set out to build an entirely new Church. A true church, they said, is a company of redeemed men and women having officers and discipline chosen by themselves, faithfully observing the Ordinances of Christ, preaching the Word to the world, and having free association with other believers and churches. Their church was autonomous and democratic. Yet, as Payne reminds us, the Baptist conception was a form of high churchmanship, in its emphasis on the faith pre-supposed by believers' baptism, in its assertion of the immediate Lordship of Christ, in its loyalty to the Ordinances of the Gospel, and in its "inner urge" to communion and fellowship with other Christians.

3. Concerning Freedom of Conscience and Separation of Church and State

It followed from the Baptist doctrines of individual competency and the Church that there should be freedom of conscience for all and that Church and State should be separate as to authority and as to primary concernment. Baptists absolutely pioneered in Britain in urging these ideas, the first of which has won general acceptance in the modern Christian world, and the second of which has been fully accepted in several notable instances and is yet winning greater acceptance among the nations.

4. Concerning a Restatement of the Missionary Obligation of the Local Church

The early Baptists called the attention of Protestant Christianity to the New Testament missionary obligation of the Church

1. The Fellowship of Believers, p. 32.

by enunciating in their Confessions the proposition that to this end believers were called into community, and by demonstrating the missionary passion in calling men to repentance and faith. Their missionary conviction was such that it modified their predominantly Calvinistic theology. Is it great wonder that William Carey, the father of modern missions, came of the line which flowed from the Baptist Confessions of 1644-1660?

APPENDIX A

THE REVIVAL OF IMMERSION BY ENGLISH BAPTISTS

It is well known that the change in the mode of baptism occurred in Western Europe, in France and Italy, in the thirteenth century. The compromise of immersing the body and sprinkling the head was tried for a while, but the Council of Ravenna (1311) placed aspersion in first place, immersion in second. England was the only Western European country which rejected the change proposed at Ravenna. Nevertheless, the change came there too, though very gradually. From 1545 the Book of Common Prayer had a rubric based on an ecclesiastical code of 1085 which permitted the minister merely to pour water on the head of English infants who^{1.} were thought too weak for dipping. These exceptions became more numerous, but until 1620, at least, English infants were habitually dipped. When a son was born to James VI of Scotland, Queen Elizabeth^{2.} sent a font in which the child should be dipped. In 1635 William Ames, a prominent Church of England minister in Holland,^{3.} wrote against 'Thrice dipping,' but he insisted on dipping. As late as 1644, Blake, rector of Tamworth, was saying, 'I have been an eyewitness of many infants dipped, and know it to have been the common practice of many ministers in their places for many years^{4.} together.'

Immersion had been revived early in the sixteenth century among the Swiss Anabaptists, though not all Anabaptists by any means were

1. Whitley, "A Word, a Thought, a Deed," The Chronicle, October, 1943, pp. 168-170.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. Vedder, A Short History of the Baptists, pp. 143-144.

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immersionists. From them the practice seems to have passed through northern Italy to the Socinians (Unitarians) of Poland. The Socinians' Catechism and Confession of Krakau (1574), the first of their manifestos, declared for immersion, and Socinians in Lithuania, Pomerania, and Silesia, as well as in Poland, carried on the practice. Before 1574 a Belgian had spent some time among these Socinians, and it was a descendent of his, Jan Evertszoon Geesteren, who introduced immersion to Holland.

Geesteren was pastor of a Dutch Reformed church at Alkmaar in 1610, but being anti-Calvinistic, he was ejected after the Synod of Dort. Then he moved to the little village of Rijnsburg, near Leyden, and became affiliated with the Collegiants. To the young Collegiant movement he introduced the practice of immersing believers, himself being immersed in 1620. From the group at Rijnsburg he went out to establish similar groups in many parts of Holland, including Amsterdam. The Rijnsburgers (called Collegiants from their collegia or meetings) were an informal group of liberals first drawn together by the brothers Van der Kodde, largely in protest against the harsh decisions of Dort, and for the independent and systematic study of the Scriptures. All Christians were invited to their meetings and any might present his views when they assembled. The Collegiants did not want to set up a new church or denomination. One of them said, '... we do not want to be called a sect, but if we are considered one for all that, we wish to be

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one having as our object the union of all sects.'^{1.} The matter of baptism being brought to their attention, they searched the Scriptures, and reading the plainly printed "Dooop" in their Bibles, they concluded at once that the act of baptism had originally been by immersion. They had already reached the conclusion that only believers should be baptized. After 1619 immersion became common among their societies. The Rijnsburgers may have attracted little attention at first, but by the middle of the seventeenth century their movement had spread over most of Holland.

The revival of the practice of immersion in England certainly had associations with Holland, even as in the case of believers' baptism; but, it came largely as result of questions in the minds of some thoughtful Englishmen. The source of these questions is another matter, and Whitley^{2.} suggests a twofold possibility in that connection. His tracing is as follows: A certain John Batten, a prominent and perhaps a charter member of the Rijnsburgers, lived at Leyden in 1619. Soon he moved to Amsterdam, where he does not seem to have become actively associated with the local Collegiant congregation. But in Leyden there was the Brownist church which had been formed in London in 1592 and had lived for some years in Amsterdam. In 1623 John Canne became pastor of this church, and under his leadership it took on new life. He kept up a warm intercourse with England and finally returned there in 1641. The Broad-

1. Collins, "Dutch Dissenters and English General Baptists," Transactions Baptist Hist., Soc., Vol. 4 (1914-15), p. 71.

2. "The Revival of Immersion in Holland and England," ibid. (1912-13), pp. 32-35.

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mead Records report that by Easter of that year, when he visited Bristol, he was "a BAPTIZED man," laying stress on immersion. The conclusion is that Canne and Batten must have been acquainted in Amsterdam. Some of Canne's activities in England can be traced. In 1630 he was urging certain changes in the covenant of the Church of John Lathrop. Ten years later the question of immersion was being warmly debated in the same church, now under the leadership of Henry Jessey. Canne's influence around Bristol is probably seen in Wynell's Covenant's Plea for Infants, published in September, 1642. He was well known to the anti-paedobaptist congregations which had withdrawn from Jessey's Church in London. His connection with the sending of Richard Blunt to Holland is seen in the fact that Blunt found his way to Batten's Church in Amsterdam.

The other possible source of questions among the Particular Baptists concerning immersion is even more surprising. About 1559, Cyril Lucar, a Cretan, who had studied at Geneva among other places, went to minister in Poland and Lithuania. In his Church (the Greek Orthodox) he was, of course, accustomed to the immersion of infants. He must also have encountered the Socinian practice of immersing only believers. Later as patriarch of Alexandria he sought to reform the Greek Church after the Calvinistic pattern. As part of his program he sent young Greeks to study in Swiss, Dutch, and English universities. Emanuel Lucar, probably a relative of the patriarch, and his sons, Emanuel, Ciprian, and Mark, appear in

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London in 1613. By 1638 Mark was a member of the nascent anti-paedobaptist church of Eaton, and on January 11, 1642, he was immersed. If he held, as did the other Greeks sent out by Cyril Lucar, that immersion was the proper mode of baptism, what is more likely than that he first suggested the question to the church?

Probably both Canne and Lucar urged immersion. Why then was Blunt sent to Holland? Lucar, of course, had been immersed as an infant and not on profession of faith; but why not turn to Canne as an administrator of the Ordinance? The only available answer lies in the fact that Canne was an open-membership Baptist, and the church may already have decided in favor of the closed-membership position (i.e., only baptized believers are eligible for membership). The question posed by that answer is, what about the strange willingness of these Baptists to ignore Batten's theological position? for he was most probably strongly anti-Calvinistic. Did these Baptists think less of their Calvinism than of their doctrine of the Church?

A likely answer to the whole problem lies in the explanation that the Baptists had arrived independently, following suggestions from more than one source, through diligent study of the Greek New Testament, and after much discussion among themselves, at the conclusion that immersion must be the correct mode of baptism. Then they decided to send Blunt to the Rijnsburgers with a letter seeking substantiation of their conclusions and any further instruction which might come from a group which had for years been

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practicing the immersion of believers. Blunt, then, may not have been immersed by the Rijnsburgers in Amsterdam, but only have received instructions from them. Upon his return home he may have been baptized by Blacklock, after which he baptized Blacklock, and the two of them baptized the remainder of the company. The language of the only account we have of that first baptizing in 1642

^{1.} does not prohibit this interpretation. Thus the theological differences of Batten and the English Baptists would not enter the picture; the Baptists were only inquiring about baptism. Certainly they must not have been interested in any succession through the Rijnsburgers, for Article 41 of their Confession shows that they were convinced that any "Disciple" might administer baptism.

1. According to the Kiffin Mss., 'Mr Blunt Baptized Mr. Blacklock that was a Teacher amongst them, and Mr. Blunt being Baptized, he and Mr. Blacklock Baptized the rest....' Vid. Burrage, The Early English Dissenters, Vol. 1, p. 533. Burrage suggests the above interpretation of the account.

APPENDIX B

SIGNATORIES OF "THE FAITH AND PRACTICE OF THIRTY CONGREGATIONS"

While the General Baptist Confession of 1651 is comparatively well known, the list of its signatories is quite rare. Perhaps the rarity of the list is to be accounted for by its length and the fact that it contains the names of no early leaders who are known to have been outstanding. In 1913, at the request of Dr. Thomas Richards of Bangor, North Wales, Dr. W. J. McGlothlin of Louisville, Kentucky, U.S.A., prepared a copy of the list, which may be the only copy in Great Britain today. McGlothlin's copy was from the facsimile reprint of the original (now lost) made by John Taylor of Northampton. Dr. Richards has kindly reproduced McGlothlin's copy as follows:

John Parker
Henry Redgate for Waltham, Leicestershire

Thomas Webster
Nathan Jones for Earl Shulton, Leicestershire

George Moore
Robert Hebb for Whitwiche, Leicestershire

Thomas Morrice
Thomas Townsend for Bitteswell, Leicestershire

Richard Lay
William Franke for Wimeswold, Leicestershire

Robert Fielding
William Kendall for Mountsorrel, Leicestershire

William Parker
William Wilde for Normington, Leicestershire

William Poole
William Burdet for Theddingworth, Leicestershire

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Thomas Rogers
 Coniers Conigrave for Leicester, Leicestershire

Edmund Male
 Thomas Cocks for Fennystanton, Huntingdonshire

John Danvers
 John Numan for Horley, Oxfordshire

Thomas Partridge
 Samuel Tide for Sondon, Bedfordshire

John Freeman
 W. Dalby for Burley, Rutland

James Tentoft
 Anthony Suell for Thorp, Rutland

Abraham Day
 Matthew Ley for Tixover, Rutland

John Onely
 Will. Perkins for Easenhall, Warwickshire

Michael Wills
 Thom. Jeffes for Marston, Warwickshire

Benjamin Morley
 Francis Stanley for Ravensthorp, Northamptonshire

John Lupton
 Will Codlyn for Tattershall, Lincolnshire

Thomas Drewry
 Richard Drewry for Golsby, Lincolnshire

Ralph James
 Daniel Clesman for North Willingham, Lincolnshire

Valentine James
 John Johnjohns for Lincoln, Lincolnshire

Richard Craford
 Edward Cock for Boston, Lincolnshire

William Barnes
 William Hart for Swyneshead, Lincolnshire

Jo: Lacye
 Robert Massey for Surflet, Lincolnshire

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Robert Pecke
Jo: Beaver
Robert Dyer for Thurlby, Lincolnshire

Reg. Allen
John Lucas for Blankney, Lincolnshire

Robert Thompson
Richard Machyn for Leasingham, Lincolnshire

Thomas Everard, senior
Robert Angleshaw for Welby, Lincolnshire

John Allen
Robert Cock for Westby, Lincolnshire

APPENDIX C

WERE THERE OTHER BAPTIST CONFESSIONS IN THE PERIOD ?

There may have been other local Baptist Confessions of Faith prepared during the years 1640-1660, but which have disappeared. It would seem that most of the earliest associations put forward doctrinal statements in some form. Thorough search of Great Britain has revealed only the eight documents certainly belonging to Baptists which are considered in this study.

One other document has been discovered, but there is some doubt as to whether it represented a Baptist group. It bears the sub-title, "a confession of faith different from those that hold it not lawfull to pray for the pardon of sinne," and it represented "Henoeh Howet, Robert Smallbone, and some others." Something is known of Enoch (or Henoeh) Howet, but nothing of Smallbone and the others. Howet lived in Lincolnshire, and the group with which he was connected may have sprung from an Independent church which Taylor (History of the English General Baptists, Vol.1, pp. 127-128) records arose about 1644 in the South Marsh. Four of the members of this church are said to have separated themselves in 1651 when they accepted the principle of believers' baptism. Taylor thinks these members became General Baptists. If they published the Confession, they were yet far from the General Baptist position in 1645. There were other divisions of the Independent church, according to Taylor, and perhaps an earlier one of these produced the Confession in 1645.

Enoch Howet seems to have become a Baptist. He wrote against

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the Quakers in 1654 (when his work, Quaking Principles dashed in pieces..., was printed by Henry Hills, the London Particular Baptist printer), in 1658, and in 1659. When the Quakers responded to his sixty-four-page work of 1659, they identified his stand with that of "the people called Baptists." (Vid. Whitley, A Baptist Bibliography, pp. 75 and 220) When Howet became a Baptist is not known, but probably not as early as 1645. He must have been a Particular Baptist, and Particular Baptists are not known to have been in Lincolnshire so early.

The Confession is interesting as an illustration of the reaction of one Separatist group to the harsh determinism of some Calvinists of the period. It is concerned only with the theological outlook of the group, and its special concern is with the question, should men pray for the pardon of sin, or is sin "pardoned before committed"? The authors strongly opposed a deterministic view. Decidedly Calvinistic positions were taken on Election, Depravity, the Atonement, Providence, Perseverance, Justification, and Sanctification. There is, however, nowhere a specific indication that the Confession represented Baptists.

There are but two extant copies of the Confession of which there is knowledge, one in the British Museum, and the other in the Friend's Library, Devonshire House, Bishopsgate. It, therefore, seems wise to include on the following pages a facsimile copy of the document found in the British Museum, including the "Reasons" which it lists for separation from those who hold a deterministic theology.

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Sinnes suffered for but not Remitted, before they be Committed,
1645

First, wee believe, that there is a People that are chosen before the world, was in Christ; that is, in the Covenant of his peace (in him) that is, that wee should in time be in him, as new Creatures; after we were old, and should become new, 2 Cor. 5.17. And also not before Creation, but after wee were Creatures; which choice wee understand that God did foreknow, what he himselfe did intend to create and bring to passe, and not what was made, for then he did but know; If foreknow, then before we had a being he did know; which foreknowledge of his, was upon all things to be, because he is the Author of all things: I Cor. II.12, and nothing whatsoever could come to passe without his determination; so, that meanes and ends are all obtained by him.

Wee believe, that this people are chosen to salvation; but after this choice, many things doe intervene their Election, and the Injoyment of a full salvation, as Creation, before which they were not; Sin, which is an Act, or Neglect after they were, which is called the transgression of the Law, a washing from that Sin, Pardon, Healing, Forgivenessse, Remitting, &c, after they were, and sinnes severally by them committed, by looking up to Christ, believing.

Wee believe, that Remission of Sin is an Act that floweth from the Revelation of the righteousnessse of Christ, viz. as the Sunne in in the Firmament, sending forth his beames, will part two things that are frozen together, so the rightnesse of the Sonne of God appearing, parts the guilt of sinne, and the soule; but forgivenessse of sinne consists of two parts, remitting of their depravity, or disorder, that is caused in the soule by sin, whose poysoned sting doth as it were disjoynt and benumn the whole soule, making it unfit for any communion with God or Saints, causing it to run away from God, untill Christ our good Shepherd seek us up, and it is well wee have him; for were it not for him, wee should never leave running from God, to Hell and destruction, untill we perished eternally; for it is not our turning, but Christ's turning us, whereby wee are delivered. The second is, delivering us from the curse of the Law, which is either inward, as Pangs, Torments, blindnessse of Minde, hardnesse of Heart &c. or outward Judgments for sinne: in the former man is delivered at the time of his Justification wholly, for all that is past: But, from the last, I meane outward Judgment, many of the deare Saints, whose sinne in all other senses may be pardoned, yet in this, I meane in delivering from outward Judgments, which are the debts for sinne (the forgivenessse whereof, Christ bids us pray for) for ought I know, may not be pardoned a great part of, or all their life time, as Davids sin pardoned, yet God's Judgment for it, (the Sword shall never depart &c. and his wives layne withall in the fight of the Sunne) continued.

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Moyses, the Servant of the Lord, yet did die upon Mount Pisga, for the sinne of unbeliefe, and many a redeemed Saint are yet capable of death, and outward affliction, as Child-bearing in sorrow, &c. which are the rewards of Adams sinne; so that the Child-bearing woman, may cry for pardon or ease, and say in Judgment remember mercie; yet these are so farre from being curses, that God turns them all into blessings, and makes the elect enjoy them as Servants, for their good: It is good (saith David) that I have been afflicted, for thereby I learned thy statutes; all things being ordered by our Christ, works together for our good; and this is brought to passe by that God, whose love cannot be taken from us, by our sinnes: but as a Father shewes most love, when his Children are sick, and lame; so Gods healing mercies appear, when wee are wounded: when seven Divells is in a Mary Magdalen, they could not turne off Gods love, but he turnes them out of doores, because of his eternal love, and though his love be unmoveable: yet he never promised to keepe them, that they should not sinne; but when they sinne, to restore them; pardoning is the continuall portion of a Child, when the wicked shall perish.

Wee believe, that sinne was not before the sinning person had a being, and could not be forgiven him before he was, nor remitted before it was fastened to the soule; the word remit, signifies to let goe againe, and could that be, before it had a place?

Wee believe, that the person that hath the strongest faith that can be, that is, so knowing, that he can believe that whilst he prayeth, that he hath the thing he prayeth for, is capable to receive pardon from God, therefore not pardoned, before he sinne.

Wee believe, that the Advocate hath nothing to doe for us concerning sinne, except wee commit it; but if wee sinne, we have an Advocate: which if implies, that after sinne be committed, Christ doth Advocate for us; if wee confesse our sinnes, he is faithful and just to forgive our sinnes, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousnesse: where it is proved, that sin may be seene, Confessed, and Pardoned, after Committed, and all from a fore-going Covenant, for faithfulness implyeth the performance of what was purchased; so that wee put a difference betwixt the purchase, and the faithfull performing of it, which is forgiving sinne; and the inheritance of Heaven was purchased, and they may as well say, they have that now, as to say, that they have pardon for sinne, before it be Committed.

I confesse, the Popes Bulls was in that manner; sins past, present, and to come; and by that they pardon the murthering of a Prince, before it be done; but the Scripture hath no such language, it speakes onely of sinnes past, Rom. 3.25. Wee minde a difference betweene the salve in the Chirurgians Box, and the healing of the wound; the salve may be made, before the wound that it shall heale be made, but the wound is not heal'd before it be made: therefore there may be Balme in Gilead, and yet the health of God's people not recovered.

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Wee believe, that the Fountaine that is to be, or is, set open for Iudah and Ierusalem to wash in, is, because some, whose sins Christ bore upon the Crosse, are yet unwashed.

Wee believe, that the same Christ, which dyed at Ierusalem for the sinnes of his people, doth sit as a refiner, to doe the worke upon his Saints, in purifying them as often as they shall be defiled with sinne.

Wee believe, that Christ being yet a Priest for ever, there is no time contained in this ever (that is, so long as time shall be) in which he hath not something to doe for Saints concerning sinne; which Priesthood, and advocacy, is one and the same, which is in case of sinne, and in case of Saints sinning, that are in a Church estate: in case Iohn, or any other that hath that experience that is spoken of, in the 1.2.3. verses of his first Epistle, wee, saith he, in the first verse of 2. chapter, of the same Epistle; so that the same Christ that was exalted on the right hand, doth now give remission of sinnes, and repentance; so that which was bought at his death, was given after his ascension: and therefore Christ did not forgive at his death men their sinnes, that was borne and sinned after his death, but hee forgives them after.

Notwithstanding, all this wee believe, that Saints shall have no evill befall them to destruction, but punishment for sinne, from love unto amendment: as if he should say, thou Laodicea, thou needst nothing, but art rich (as they that needs not pray for pardon, because of Gods love) but my love, if thou sinne, cannot excuse thee from my rebuke, looke to it therefore.

Wee believe, that all the sinnes the Saints shall commit, shall be pardoned; (shall be, is not) our happinesse consists in being helped, when wee shall fall, and no Emunitie wee have from fallings wee say, that is Scripture phrase, to say, sinne to come shall be pardoned, but not to say it is; if it be, then (it is true) it is a meere mocking of God, to aske him to do that, that he hath done already: and those that will not follow the direction of Christ, in praying for the pardon of sinne, are by this ground excused, and Christs direction is vaine.

Now followeth certain Reasons, why wee cannot have Communion with them that pray not for the pardon of sinne, nor with those that say, sinne is pardoned before committed.

For the first, because they know not the posture of a redeeming Child in Christ, and therefore though they talke of God with their mouths, have life from him, and in asking and receiving, they taste not: the fame of God, whose Covenant revealed rejoyces the heart, doth also rejoyce the heart in the continuall performance of it.

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The second Reason, those that doe not ask Gods pardon for sinne, and receive it after they have committed it, it is apparent, that they neither felt the sense of sinne, (for if they did, they would cry to God) nor the sweetnesse of pardon for they would know, that asking in faith, they doe receive forgivenessse of their sinnes.

For the Second, they darken counsell with words without knowledge, saying, sinne is pardoned before it bee committed. Christ counsell us to pray for the pardon of sinne, and they by words, without knowledge, saying, That sinne is pardoned before it be committed, darkeneth the counsell of Christ to the former people, who justly say, if it be pardoned, it need not to be prayed for: and wee judge them as upright as those which say, it is pardoned, and yet can pray for the pardon of it.

The second sort of people, that say, it is pardoned before it is committed, adde to the Word of God, for they say in Gods name, that which no Scripture holds forth; that sinne is pardoned before it is committed, and they cause the first to take from the word; that is, to make the wordes of Christ of no use, who bids us pray for the pardon of sinne, and so are under a curse.

Thirdly, they lay a stumbling block before the eyes of the weake, and cause them to stumble at the asking pardon of their sinnes.

Finis

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A COMPARATIVE SURVEY OF IMPORTANT POSITIONS IN THE CONFESSIONS (Using the language of the Confessions)

THE LONDON PARTICULAR BAPTIST CONFESSION, 1644

I. Theological Outlook

1. Election and Predestination: ... God hath (before the foundation of the world) foreordained some men to eternall life; leaving the rest in their sinne to their just condemnation, to the praise of his justice.

2. Extent of the Fall: ... death came upon all his posterity, who now are conceived in sinne, and by nature the children of wrath, the servants of sinne, the subjects of death, and other miseries in this world, and for ever, without relation to Christ.

3. Extent of the Atonement: Jesus Christ by his death did purchase salvation for the elect that God gave unto him. ... to them alone doth God by his Spirit apply this redemption ...

4. Providence: God in his infinite power and wisdom, doth dispose all things to the end for which they were created, that neither good nor evil befalls any by chance, or without his providence.... ... whatsoever befalls the elect, is by his appointment, for his glory and their good.

5. Perseverance: All those that have this precious faith wrought in them by the Spirit, can never finally nor totally fall away, seeing the gifts of God are without repentance ...

6. Justification: ... by the blood of Christ ... a gracious and full acquittance of a guilty sinner from all sin, by God, through the satisfaction that Christ hath made by his death for their sins. And this applied (in the manifestation of it) (1) through faith.

7. Sanctification: ... a spiritual grace of the new Covenant, and effect of the love of God...

II. Doctrine of the Scriptures

The rule of this knowledge, faith, and obedience ... in which is contained the whole duty of man, is ... only the word of God contained in the holy scriptures, in which is plainly recorded whatsoever is needful for us to know, believe, and practice, which are the only rule of holiness and obedience for all saints, at all times, in all places to be observed.

(1) This Parenthetical phrase is in the original copy.

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III. Doctrine of the Church

1. Definition of: ... a company of visible Saints, called and separated from the world, by the word and Spirit of God, to the visible profession of the faith of the gospel, being baptized into that faith, and joyned to the Lord, and to each other, by mutuall agreement, in the practical enjoyment of the Ordinances commanded by Christ their head and King.
2. Autonomy of: ... every church hath power given them from Christ ... to choose among themselves meet persons (for officers) ... none have any power to impose on them either these or any other.
3. Officers of: ... Pastors, teachers, elders, and deacons (Elders and Deacons only, in 1646 and afterward)
4. Ministerial power in: ... every church hath power given them from Christ to choose among themselves meet persons...
5. Support of Ministry of: The ministers of Christ ought to have whatsoever they shall need, supplied freely by the church...
6. Discipline in: Christ hath ... given power to his church to receive in and cast out any member that deserves it; and this power is given to every congregation, and not to one particular person... And every particular person of each church ... is subject to this censure and judgment. ... the church ought not without great care and tenderness ... to proceed against her members.
7. Relief in: (Christ hath) laid the duty upon all to watch over one another. ... they are to supply each others wants, according as their necessities shall require...
8. Inter-church Relations of: ... although the particular congregations be distinct and several bodies, every one as a compact and knit city within itself; yet are they all to walk by one rule of truth; so also they by all means convenient are to have the counsel and help one of another, if necessity require it, as members of one body, in the common faith, under Christ their head.
9. Missions and Preaching of: ... the Gospel... is to be preached to all men as the ground of faith... Faith is ordinarily begotten by the preaching of the Gospel.
10. Fellowship of: ... all his servants ... are ... called..

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The London Particular Baptist Confession

to have communion here with his saints that they may be assured that they are made meet to be partakers of their inheritance in the kingdom of God ... being fitly compact and knit together according to the effectual working of every part, to the edifying of itself in love.

IV. Doctrine of the Ordinances: Baptism and the Lord's Supper

1. Definition of Baptism: ... an ordinance of the new testament, given by Christ, to be dispensed upon persons professing faith, or that are made disciples ... (answering to) the interest the saints have in the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ; and (to the belief that) certainly shall the bodies of the saints be raised by the power of Christ in the day of the resurrection

2. Subjects of Baptism: ... persons professing faith, or that are made disciples...

3. Mode of Baptism: ... dipping or plunging the body under water; it being a sign, (it) must answer the thing signified...

4. The Supper: ... and after (baptism) partake of the Lord's Supper...

V. Doctrine of Liberty of Conscience (and Separation of Church and State)

... it is the magistrate's duty to tender the liberty of men's consciences, Eccl. viii. 8, (... without which all other liberties will not be worth the naming, much less enjoying (1) and to protect all under them from all wrong, injury, oppression, and molestation; so it is our duty not to be wanting in nothing which is for their honour and comfort. ... in all those civil laws which have been acted by them... we are bound to yield subjection and obedience ... although we should suffer never so much from them in not actively submitting to some ecclesiastical laws... (If) God withhold the Magistrates allowance (we) must notwithstanding proceed together in Christian communion, not daring to give place to suspend our practice, but to walk in obedience to Christ... ... we ought to obey God rather than men.

VI. Doctrine of the Christian Life

(All are) called ... to present their bodies and souls ... to be under his (God's) heavenly conduct and government.

(1) Parenthetical phrase in the original.

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VII. Miscellaneous Matters

1. Oaths: ... it is lawful to take an oath, so it be in truth, and in judgment, and in righteousness, for confirmation of truth and ending of all strife.
 2. Bearing Arms and Holding Civil Office: It is lawful for a Christian to be a magistrate or civil officer.
 3. Laying on of Hands: (For the ordination of officers only)
 4. Exercise of Gifts: ... such to whom God hath given gifts in the church may and ought to prophesy, according to the proportion of faith, and so to teach publicly the word of God, for the edification, exhortation, and comfort of the church.
 5. Messengers: ...
 6. Other Christian Groups: Resurrection.
 7. Articles on Eschatology on: Resurrection.
-

"THE FAITH AND PRACTICE OF THIRTY CONGREGATIONS," 1651

I. Theological Outlook

1. Election and Predestination: ... those gifts which God of his free grace gives unto men to the enabling or empowering them to obey or believe in his name, are called the grace of God...
... those that did refuse to worship or glorify God answerable to the teaching of the Creation, the Lord gave them over, or forsook them so far, that they became so desperately wicked, that they did things contrary to nature.
2. Extent of the Fall: That all mankind are liable to partake of the same death or punishment which the Lord in his righteous judgment caused to fall on Adam for his transgression.
3. Extent of the Atonement: That Jesus Christ, through (or by)⁽¹⁾ the grace of God, suffered death for all mankind, or every man.
4. Providence: ... God preserveth all creatures which are in being.
5. Perseverance: ... all those that continue steadfastly until the end of their lives, pressing forward to the mark (Jesus

(1) Parentheses in the original.

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"The Faith and Practice of 30 Congregations," 1651.

Christ)⁽¹⁾ that is set before them, shall not only have the comfort and joy which is a part of their portion in this life, but they shall also have a Crown of eternal glory in the life to come.

6. Justification: ... God loves man first, and declareth, or maketh known his love to men, before any man can Act from a principle of love in obedience to him ... believing of obeying doth not procure salvation as eternal life, neither are they any cause at all to move God to bestow it...

7. Sanctification: ... there is not, neither ever was any man endued with any abilities and power to do the revealed will of God, but it was given him from above.

II. Doctrine of the Scriptures

... whosoever shall preach, teach, or practice any doctrine in the worship of God, pretending it in the name of Jesus Christ, which is not to be heard or read of in the record of God, which was given by inspiration of the holy Ghost; such teachers are lyable to the curse of God, howsoever countenanced by men.

III. Doctrine of the Church

1. Definition of: ... the only foundation of the Church of God, is the Doctrines of the Apostles or Prophets, as they spring from Jesus Christ ... whereon this or any other people are to be built together as the house of God.. ... the chief ends of a people baptized according to the counsel of God, when they meet together as the congregation or fellowship of Christ, are ... for to walk suitably; or to give up themselves to a holy conformity to all the Laws or Ordinances of Christ, answerable to the gifts and graces received, improving them to the glory of God, and the edification of each other in love.

2. Autonomy of: ... a people (meeting) together (are) the congregation or fellowship of Christ...

3. Officers of: ... some of the gifted men should be appointed or set apart to attend upon the preaching of the word, for the further edifying of the Churches... ... the Church hath directions of God to set apart some men ... to oversee, or order the affairs concerning the poor...

4. Ministerial Power in: ... some of the gifted men should be appointed (by the Church)...

(1) Parentheses in the original.

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"The Faith and Practice of 30 Congregations," 1651.

5. Support of Ministry of: ... those Saints or members of the fellowship which are appointed ... ought to have maintenance of those that receive spiritual food of them.

6. Discipline in: ... if any one of the fellowship ... break out into an evill life and conversation, and all good meanes that God hath appointed hath been used towards such an one, and that person hath not performed, then ought not such an one to break bread with obedient walkers... ... the people of God ought to have a tender respect towards them, as long as there is any hope of ... the recovering them out of the snare of sin or wickedness.

7. Relief in: That there be contributions made for the relief of those that cannot help themselves ... especially those that are of the household of Faith.

8. Inter-Church Relations: ... if the poor fearing God, cannot conveniently have a competent maintenance, for the supply of their necessities in that society whereunto they must commonly resort, ... then ... give intelligence to the other Churches ... who have ingaged themselves by declaring their willingness towards the relief of such a distressed people. ... use may be made of some other society which they are in fellowship with, for their assistance therein (in cases of controversy which cannot be settled locally).

9. Missions and Preaching of: ... it is the gracious pleasure of God, that Jesus Christ his life, death and resurrection ... be made known unto men, and by men...

10. Fellowship of: ... the congregation of fellowship of Christ (meets for) the edification of each other in love.

III. Doctrine of the Ordinances: Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

1. Definition of Baptism: ... those which received the word of God ... and ... were baptised ... the same time or day they were of the visible Church of God.

2. Subjects of Baptism: ... the Baptisme which the Lord Jesus commanded his disciples to teach, ought to be known by everyone, before they submit themselves, or obey it.

3. Mode of Baptism: ... the way and manner of baptising (is) to go into the water, and to be baptised.

4. The Supper: ... a memorial of his (Christ's) suffering, to continue in the Church until he come again.

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"The Faith and Practice of 30 Congregations," 1651

V. Doctrine of Liberty of Conscience

VI. Doctrine of the Christian Life

... it is the gracious pleasure of God, that Jesus Christ his life, death and resurrection, should be made known unto men, and by men, as arguments or motives, to allure or provoke them to live holy or righteous in this present world. ... we ought to behave ourselves towards all men, no otherwise than we would freely and cheerfully they in the like case ... should do to us, and that we ought to seek a peaceable life with all men, so far as possible we can, keeping faith and a good conscience.

VII. Miscellaneous Matters

1. Oaths: ...

2. Bearing Arms and Holding Civil Office: ... standing ready at all times ... to vindicate such a Magistracy or Magistrates ... with our estates and lives; that Righteousness may reigne, and Vice may be overthrown, without respect of persons.

3. Laying on of Hands: (For ordination of officers only.)

4. Exercise of Gifts: That there be an orderly improving of those gifts that God ... hath bestowed on the Saints (let them be exercised) one by one, speaking the things they have learned of God, that the hearers may be profited...

5. Messengers: ... some of the gifted men should be ... set apart to attend upon the preaching of the word, for the further edifying of the Churches, that they may be able to stand against all oppositions...

6. Other Christian Groups: ...7. Articles on Eschatology on: Resurrection.CONFESSION OF SOME LONDON GENERAL BAPTISTS, 1654

I. Theological Outlook

1. Election and Predestination: ... Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him. This only (sic) have I found that God made man upright, and gave him power to rule over creatures on the earth. ... man broke that Law...

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Confession of Some London General Baptists, 1654

2. Extent of the Fall: ... man broke that Law and brought death upon himself and all posterity no man can redeem himself from this death.

3. Extent of the Atonement: ... he did do the will of his Father, in laying down his life for all sinners... I. Tim.2.6. who gave himself a ransom for all. ... God out of his love sent his son into the world ... to die for the sins of all men under the first Covenant...

4. Providence:

5. Perseverance:: Whosoever believeth and is dipped, and abideth in the Commandments to the end, shall be saved.

6. Justification and Sanctification:

II. Doctrine of the Scriptures

(Nothing in the Confession itself, but a strong statement in the introductory letter to the reader.)

III. Doctrine of the Church

1. Definition of: ... every believer dipped is to be joyned with believers dipped, which is the Church of Christ.

2. Autonomy of: That they have the power to chuse (officers).

3. Officers of: Messengers, Pastors, and Teachers...

4. Ministerial Power in: ... they have the power to chuse Messengers, Pastors, and Teachers from among themselves...

5. Support of Ministry of: ... the Church is to assist them in the work they appointed them to do, with things needful...

6. Discipline in: That they ought to cast out from among themselves all that walk disorderly, after admonition, they remaining obstinat (sic) ... That it is the dutie of every one to tell his brother of his sin, seeing him to offend...

7. Relief in: That they ought to relieve the poor, that none want amongst them, except all want, they being diligent in their callings...

8. Inter-church Relations of:

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Confession of Some London General Baptists, 1654

9. Missions and Preaching of: That he hath given down the Holy Spirit to his Servants, that they might make known to all Nations the things that concern the Name of Jesus and the Kingdom of Heaven, Acts 2.4, 2 Cor. 3.6, Acts. 28.31.

10. Fellowship of: That they ought to meet together to break bread ... That it is the dutie of every one to tell his brother of his sin, seeing him to offend...

IV. Doctrine of the Ordinances

1. Definition of Baptism:

2. Subjects of Baptism: ... they that believe...

3. Mode of Baptism: ... baptized (which in English is Dipped)...

4. The Supper: That they ought to meet together to break bread ... Do this in remembrance of me, saith Christ.

V. Doctrine of Liberty of Conscience

... they ought to be obedient to the Magistrates in all things that are right...

VI.. Doctrine of the Christian Life

... every one of them ought to be holy in life and conversation.

VII. Miscellaneous Matters

1. Oaths:

2. Bearing Arms and Holding Civil Office:

3. Laying on of Hands: That God gives his Spirit to believers dipped through the prayer faith and laying on of hands... (also, officers are ordained by fasting and prayer, with the laying on of hands)

4. Excerise of Gifts: That every member ought to exercise his gift for the benefit of others...

5. Messengers: That they have power to chuse Messengers...
... Apostles (which in English is Messengers)

6. Other Christian Groups: That all ought to avoid the hearing of any Teachers so as to learn of them, except believers dipped, and making of marriages with any out of the Church, lest

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Confession of Some London General Baptists, 1654

they be drawn from the truth...

7. Articles on Eschatology on: Second Advent and a General Resurrection, and Judgment.

THE MIDLAND PARTICULAR BAPTIST ASSOCIATION CONFESSION, 1655

I. Theological Outlook

1. Election and Predestination: That God elected and chose, in his eternal counsel, some persons to life and salvation, before the foundation of the world, whom accordingly he doth and will effectually call...

2. Extent of the Fall: ... his (Adam's) fall overthrew, not only himself, but his posterity, making them sinners by his disobedience; so that they are by nature children of wrath, and defiled from the womb, being shapen in iniquity and conceived in sin.

3. Extent of the Atonement: ... gave himself for the elect, to redeem them to God by his blood. ... consent not with those who hold that God has given power to all men to believe to salvation.

4. Providence:

5. Perseverance: ... whom he doth so call, he will certainly keep by his power, through faith to salvation.

6. Justification: ... by Christ ... apprehended by faith; and that no man is justified in the sight of God partly by Christ and partly by works. ... (Men) have no power of themselves to believe savingly.

7. Sanctification:

II. Doctrine of the Scriptures

We profess and believe the Holy Scriptures, the Old and New Testament, to be the word and revealed mind of God, which are able to make men wise unto Salvation through faith and love which is in Christ Jesus; and that they are given by inspiration of God, serving to furnish the man of God for every good work; and by them we are ... to try all things whatsoever are brought to us, under the pretence of truth.

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The Midland Particular Baptist Association Confession, 1655

III. Doctrine of the Church

1. Definition of: ... persons so baptized ought, by free consent, to walk together, as God shall give opportunity in distinct churches ... continuing in the apostles doctrine and fellowship, breaking of bread, and prayers, as fellowmen caring for one another, according to the will of God.
2. Autonomy of: ... distinct churches...
3. Officers of:
4. Ministerial Power in:
5. Support of Ministry of:
6. Discipline in:
7. Relief in: ... as fellow-men caring for one another...
8. Inter-church Relations of:
9. Missions and Preaching of:
10. Fellowship of: ... by free consent, to walk together ... continuing in the apostles doctrine and fellowship ...

IV. Doctrine of the Ordinances: Baptism and the Lord's Supper

1. Definition of Baptism: ... representing the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ.
2. Subjects of Baptism: ... all those who profess faith in Christ, and make the same appear by their fruits, are the proper subjects of baptism.
3. Mode of Baptism: ... not be sprinkling, but dipping of the persons in the water...
4. The Supper: All these ordinances of Christ are enjoined in his Church, being to be observed till his Second Coming...

V. Doctrine of Liberty of Conscience

VI. Doctrine of the Christian Life

That all who have faith wrought in their hearts by the power of God, according to his good pleasure, should be careful to maintain good works, and to abound in them, acting from principles of true faith and unfeigned love, looking to God's glory as their main end.

VII. Miscellaneous Matters

1. Oaths: ...

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The Midland Particular Baptist Association Confession, 1655

2. Bearing Arms and Holding Civil Office:
3. Laying on of Hands:
4. Exercise of Gifts:
5. Messengers:
6. Other Christian Groups:
7. Articles on Eschatology on: Resurrection and Judgment
(in one). (The Second Advent is mentioned in another.)

THE SOMERSET OR WESTERN PARTICULAR BAPTIST CONFESSION, 1656

I. Theological Outlook

1. Election and Predestination: ... God did in his Son freely ... elect and choose some to himself before the foundation of the world... Whom he in time hath, doth, and will call, justify, sanctify, and glorify.
2. Extent of the Fall: (Adam) brought himself and his posterity under the guilt and judgment denounced (sic) ... Man being in this undone estate...
3. Extent of the Atonement: ... those who were ... elected and chosen in Christ... Bearing the sins of his people on his own body on the cross. And by his death upon the cross, he hath obtained eternal redemption and deliverance for his church.
4. Providence: ... all things are disposed by the hand of God, and all for good to his people.
5. Perseverance: That those that are chosen of God, called and justified, shall never finally fall from him ... kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.
6. Justification: ... God's accounting and declaring that man justified, from the guilt and condemnation of all his sin, who hath received Jesus Christ, and doth believe in him (in truth and power) sic according to the record given of him by God in scripture. ... justification ... is only obtained through faith in Jesus Christ...
7. Sanctification: ... this faith ... doth not only interest us in our justification, sonship, and glory, but it produceth, as effects and fruits, a conformity, in a measure, to the Lord Jesus, in his will, graces, and virtues.

APPENDIX D

The Somerset Confession, 1656

II. Doctrine of the Scriptures

... the scriptures, the Old Testament and the New Testament (are the) rule and direction unto us both for faith and practice.

III. Doctrine of the Church

1. Definition of: ... being thus (by baptism) planted in the visible church or body of Christ, who are a company of men and women separated out of the world by the preaching of the Gospel. Do walk together in communion, in all the commandments of Jesus ... who make ... demonstration of ... new birth.

2. Autonomy of: ... in the order of the Gospel ... in several congregations and assemblies...

3. Officers of: ... for the performance of the several duties...

4. Ministerial Power in: ... the church of Jesus Christ, with its ministry, may from among themselves, make choice of such members ... and approve and ordain such....

5. Support of Ministry of: ... such a ministry ... have power to receive a livelihood of their brethren, whose duty it is to provide a comfortable subsistence for them, if they be able, to whom for Christ's sake they are servants. (It is) commandable ... that they (ministers) labour and work with their hands.

6. Discipline in: (Order of procedure against a brother: Private admonition, witnesses, church-action against, and accounting as a heathen if there is no repentance.)

7. Relief in: Administering one to another according to the gift ... temporals...

8. Inter-church Relations: That it is the duty of the members of Christ in the order of the gospel, though in several congregations and assemblies (being one in the head) sic, if occasion be, to communicate each to other, in things spiritual and things temporal.

9. Missions and Preaching of: He (Christ) gave them (the Apostles) power and abilities to propagate, to plant to rule and order, That this foundation (Christ) and ministration aforesaid is a sure guide, rule, and direction... to direct, inform, and restore us to our just freedom and liberty, to be right worship and order belonging to the church of Jesus Christ. That it is an ordinance of Christ, so it is the duty of his church, in his authority to send forth such brethren as are fitly gifted and qualified through the Spirit of Christ, to preach the gospel to the world.

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The Somerset Confession, 1656

10. Fellowship of: ... it is both the duty and privilege of the church of Christ ... in their fellowship together in the ordinances of Christ, to enjoy, prize, and press after, fellowship through and in the Spirit with the Lord, and each with other. ... attained through exercise of faith in the death, resurrection, and life of Christ.

IV. Doctrine of the Ordinances: Baptism and the Lord's Supper

1. Definition of Baptism: Therein to signify and represent a washing away of sin. And their death, burial, and resurrection with Christ....

2. Subjects of Baptism: That it is the duty of every man and woman, that have repented from dead works, and have faith towards God, to be baptized.

3. Mode of Baptism: ... that is, dipped or buried under the water

4. The Supper: (Only an injunction to observe it.)

V. Doctrine of Liberty of Conscience

(Insistence upon Christ, the foundation, and the apostolic method of witnessing will) restore us to our just freedom and liberty...

VI. Doctrine of the Christian Life

(21 commandments of Christ to be followed in daily living are listed.)

VII. Miscellaneous Matters

1. Oaths: ...

2. Bearing Arms and Holding Civil Office: ...

3. Laying on of Hands: (For officers' ordination only)

4. Gifts, Exercise of: The brethren in ministering forth their gifts, ought to do it decently and in order, one by one, that all may learn and all may be comforted.

5. Messengers: ... it is an ordinance of Christ ... to send forth ... brethren ... to preach the gospel to the world.

6. Other Christian Groups: ...

7. Articles on Eschatology on: Second Advent, Resurrection, Heaven, and Hell.

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A WELSH GENERAL BAPTIST CONFESSION (Date uncertain)

I. Theological Outlook

1. Election and Predestination: ... it was the purpose of god (sic) before time to reject such as would reject him in time... when any soul does believe and put on Christ, then is he first elected a vessell of honer fit for the masters use ... and this was the purpose of god before time, but that any are absolutely elected while they continue in unbelieve, and disobedience, we deny. ... then is a soul realie particularly and absolutely elected, when he puts on Christ by believing, this is the way that god hath chosen to unite us unto him selfe...

2. Extent of the Fall: (Adam brought) himselfe and all mankind in himselfe under condemnation...

3. Extent of the Atonement: Christ... in this nature, (gave) himselfe a Ransome to god for all menne by tasting death for every man, and soe is becom a propitiation for the sins of the world... soe that noe man shall sufer for Adams sin, Christ hath taken away the guilt and condemnation of it, And none are guiltie of sin, untill they com to act sin ... the son shall not neare the iniquitie of the father, Christ hath redemed them from it.

4. Providence:

5. Perseverance:

6. Justification: ... god hath freely purchased salvation for thee if thou wilt but accept it...

7. Sanctification:

II. Doctrine of the Scriptures

... goe for direction to the god of truth, and with the Noble Bereans, search the Scriptures...

III. Doctrine of the Church

1. Definition of: (None explicit, but an objection to infant baptism is:) ... it makes the church to consist of all sorts...

2. Autonomy of:

3. Officers of:

4. Ministerial Power in:

5. Discipline in:

6. Support of Ministry in:

7. Relief in:

8. Inter-church Relations:

9. Missions and Preaching of: ... it is the duty of those who have found truth Not to hide it under a Bushell, but to publish

APPENDIX D

A Welsh General Baptist Confession

and declare it for the good, and edification of others.

10. Fellowship of:

IV. Doctrine of the Ordinances:

1. Definition of Baptism: ... an ordinance...
2. Subjects of Baptism: ... those that doe believe and discerne for what end it was ordained ... but to administer it unto infants is noe ordinance appointed by god, but a tradition of men.
3. Mode of Baptism: ... the word baptizo signifies to dip not as Rantizo to sprinkle...
4. The Supper:

V. Doctrine of Liberty of Conscience.

VI. Doctrine of the Christian Life

... be not deceived god is not mocked whatsoever a man sowes that shall he reape... (An objection to absolute reprobation: it makes a man careless.)

VII. Miscellaneous Matters

1. Other Christian Groups: ... the baptisme of infants was ordained to take away sins, as may be sen in the common prayer booke ... tow administer it (baptism) unto infants as it hath bene used in the Church of England, is noe ordinance appointed by god com out of her (Church of England) my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.

"AN ANTIDOTE AGAINST THE INFECTION OF THE TIMES," 1656

I. Theological Outlook

1. Election and Predestination: ... it is by an effectual calling alone you may come to enjoy true light and salvation..
2. Extent of the Fall: ... sinful corruption defiles the whole man, even in his first conception in the womb, and infects all the parts and faculties of body and soul...
3. Extent of the Atonement: ... a sufficient price to satisfie the infinite justice of God ... God hath declared satisfaction

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"An Antidote....," 1656

thereby for the sins of his people... (Christ) is made unto such as receive him, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption....

4. Providence:....

5. Perseverance: (Seeking) justification by man's own righteousness (results in souls being) put on the rack so as they shall never have assurance of salvation.

6. Justification: ...we are justified by Christ alone, without any relation to works done by ourselves.....that heady generation that popishly hold justification to be an inherent or habitual righteousness (are to be called foolish).

7. Sanctification: (Christ) is made unto such as receive him ... sanctification....

II. Doctrine of the Scriptures

... have a special regard for the holy Scriptures, which are God's Word, Testament and Will concerning all the sons and daughters of men.... (Doubt) the tongues of bāaspemers questioning the authority thereof, as the word of God....

III. Doctrine of the Church

1. Definition of:2. Autonomy of: ... the Churches....3. Officers of: Ministers ... Elders

4. Ministerial Power in: ...that the election of Ministers by the people, and their ordination by Elders, is cleer (sic) in Scripture....

5. Support of Ministry of: There is much ado now about such things as are left to Christian prudence, and wherein every man should be satisfied in his own minde ... so ... it is about ministers maintenance....

6. Discipline in: ... censures; warranted by Mat. 18,15,16,17, 18,19,20. Act. 2, 41,42. and most of the Epistles.

7. Relief in: ... see that ye be tender of the poorest Saint, as the apple of your eye; let the image of Christ in him, and the riches of grace be more to you, than if you were clothed with costly array, and gold rings, and were ever so rich in this world....

8. Inter-church Relations: ... as these considerations (have helped) to keep up a spirit of union among us, so we hope they may do with you...

9. Preaching and Missions in: Be invited therefore all ye that desire your own salvation to frequent the Ministry of the word, that your souls may live Preaching of the Gospel, plainly instituted by Christ.... Remember that he hath been long calling on you ... and boldly come to him whose armes are spread,

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"An Antidote.....," 1656

and heart is open to receive you.

10. Fellowship of: Church fellowship ... warranted by Matt...
and most of the Epistles. (See Relief of Needy above.)

IV. Doctrine of the Ordinances: Baptism and the Lord's Supper

1. Definition of Baptism:
2. Subjects of Baptism: ... all believers...
3. Mode of Baptism: Baptism of believers in water ordained by Christ...
4. The Supper: Breaking of bread ... ordained and practiced by Christ ... and upon that account by the Churches....

V. Doctrine of Liberty of Conscience

What is it but pride that makes men to intrude into the Throne of Christ, making laws for their brethren, and judging them for the breach of them? ... to bind and judge consciences, expecting all to bow to thee...

VI. Doctrine of the Christian Life

Beware of Hypocrasie and formality of profession ... (Fifteen marks of pharaseeism given.)

VII. Miscellaneous Matters

1. Oaths:
2. Bearing Arms and Holding Civil Office: Contempt of Magistracy is a sin of the last times....
3. Laying on of Hands: (For ordaining officers only)
4. Exercise of Gifts: ... how they (divisions) hinder prayers and edification of those gifts that the Lord hath given among you God gives them (ministers) and gifts from Heaven...
5. Messengers:
6. Other Christian Groups: (Repeated direct references to Quakers and their teachings.)
7. Articles on Eschatology on: Second Advent and Judgment.

THE STANDARD GENERAL BAPTIST CONFESSION, 1660

I. Theological Outlook

1. Election and Predestination: ... God hath even before "the foundation of the World chosen" (or elected) ⁽¹⁾ "to eternal life, such as believe," and so are in Christ ... yet ... the purpose

1. Parenthesis in the original.

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The Standard General Baptist Confession, 1660

of God according to election, was not in the least arising from fore-seen faith... That men not considered as men, but ungodly men, "were of old ordained to condemnation..."

2. Extent of the Fall: That all Children dying in infancy, having not actually transgressed against the Law of God in their own persons, are only subject to the first death, which comes upon them by the sin of the first "Adam" ... not that any one ... shall suffer for "Adams" sin, eternal punishment in Hell ... (Man) fell ... into a miserable and mortal estate, subject to the first death.

3. Extent of the Atonement: Christ ... freely "gave himself a ransome for all" "tasting death for every man" no man shall eternally suffer in Hell for want of a Christ that dyed for them...

4. Providence:

5. Perseverance: ...true believers ... may nevertheless for want of watchfulness, swerve and turn aside from the same, and become as withered branches cast into the fire and burned.

6. Justification: ... the way set forth by God for man to be justified in, is by faith in Christ ... such so believing are justified from all their sins, their faith shall be accounted for righteousness.

7. Sanctification: ... such "who ass unto their Faith Vertue (sic), and unto Vertue Knowledge ... "such shall never fall ... for they are kept by the power of God, through Faith unto Salvation."

II. Doctrine of the Scriptures

... the holy Scriptures is the rule whereby Saints both in matters of Faith, and conversation are to be regulated, they being able to make men wise unto salvation, through Faith in Christ Jesus...

III. Doctrine of the Church

1. Definition of: ... the right and only way of gathering Churches ... is first to teach, or preach the Gospel ... and then to Baptize ... to draw nigh unto God in submission to that principle of Christ's Doctrine, to wit, Prayer and Laying on of Hands... "to continue stedfastly in Christs and the Apostles Doctrine, and assembling together, in fellowship, in breaking of Bread, and Prayers."

2. Autonomy of: ... the Churches ...

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The Standard General Baptist Confession, 1660

3. Officers of: Elders or Pastors which ... oversee, and feed his Church ... Deacons, (called Overseers of the poor) sic.

4. Ministerial Power in: ... as such chose, and ordained (by the Church)...

5. Support of Ministry of: ... such who have spiritual things, freely Ministered unto them, ought freely to communicate necessary things to the Ministers ... as for Tyths, or any forced Maintenance, we utterly deny...

6. Discipline in: ... the true Church of Christ, ought after the first and second admonition, to reject all Hereticks, and ... to withdraw from all such, as ... walks disorderly in their conversations, any wayes causes divisions or offences, contrary to the Doctrine ... which they learned.

7. Relief in: ... the poor Saints belonging to the Church of Christ, are to be sufficiently provided for by the Churches, that they neither want food or rayment, and this by a free and voluntary contribution ... through the help of the Deacons...

8. Inter-church Relations of: (Inference: The Churches are to pool their relief efforts whenever necessary.)

9. Missions and Preaching of: ... Christ hath commanded, that the Gospel (to wit, the glad tydings of remission of sins) should be preached to every creature ... So that no man shall eternally suffer in Hell ... for want of a Christ that dyed for them all men at one time or other, are put into such a capacity, as that ... they may be eternally saved ... (Gifted members) ought to exercise their gifts not only in the Church but also to preach ... to the World...

10. Fellowship of: ... it is the duty of such as are constituted as aforesaid, to "continue stedfastly in Christs and the Apostles Doctrine, and assembling together, in fellowship, in breaking of Bread, and Prayers."

IV. Doctrine of the Ordinances: Baptism and the Lord's Supper

1. Definition of Baptism:

2. Subjects of Baptism: such only of them, as profess "repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ."

3. Mode of Baptism: ... to Baptize (that is in English to Dip) sic...

4. The Supper: (Enjoined as a part of Church-fellowship)

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The Standard General Baptist Confession, 1660

V. Doctrine of Liberty of Conscience (and of Church and State)

That it is the will, and mind of God ... that all men should have the free liberty of their own CONSCIENCES (sic) in matters of Religion, or Worship, without the least oppression, or persecution, as simply upon that account; and that for any in authority otherwise to act, we confidently believe is expressly contrary to the minde of Christ ... in case the Civil Powers do impose we say, that we ought to obey God rather than men.

VI. Doctrine of the Christian Life.

... unless men so professing, and practicing the forme and order of Christs Doctrine, shall also beautifie the same with a holy and wise conversation, in all godliness and honesty; the profession of the visible form will be rendered to them of no effect; "for without holiness no man shall see the Lord."

VII. Miscellaneous Matters.

1. Oaths:

2. Bearing Arms and Holding Civil Office:

3. Laying on of Hands: That it is the duty of all such who are believers "Baptized," to draw nigh unto God in submission to that principle of Christs Doctrine, to wit, Prayer and Laying on of Hands, that they may receive the promise of the holy Spirit ... whereby they may "mortifie the deeds of the body..."

4. Exercise of Gifts: ... such who first orderly comes into, and are brought up in the School of Christs Church, and waiting there, comes to degrees of Christianity rightly qualified, and considerably gifted by God's Spirit; ought to exercise their gifts not only in the Church but also to preach ... to the world (they being approved of by the Church so to do) sic ...

5. Messengers: (See 4.)

6. Other Christian Groups: ... all such (as do not insist on a regenerate church membership) we utterly deny, forasmuch as we are commanded to "have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness..." (Church of England practices are disowned in several places.)

7. Articles on Eschatology on: Resurrection, Judgment, and Reign of Christ and His Saints.

APPENDIX E

THE CONFESSION OF SOME LONDON GENERAL BAPTISTS. 1654

The True Gospel-faith declared according to the Scriptures

I.

First, I believe there is but one God, I Cor. 8.6 But to us there is but one God. See 2 Kings 19.15 Mark 12.42, who is eternal, invisible, the onely wise God etc Rev. 15.3. Great and marvellous are thy works Lord God Almighty, just and true are thy ways. Psalm 145.9. The Lord is good to all, who is present in all places, knows all things, Pv. 15.3. The eye of the Lord is present in every place beholding the evil and the good, Acts 15.18. Known to the Lord are all his works from the beginning of the world. Iohn 6. For Iesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not and who should betray him. See also Heb. 4.13. Who made Heaven, Earth, the Seas and all that is in them, Acts 17.14. God made the world and all things therein. See Rev. 14.7 Iohn 1.9 Iohn 1.3 Col. 1.15,16. And made man upright, Eccles. 7.29, This onely have I found that God made man upright, and gave him power to rule over all creatures on the earth, Gen. 9.2. The fear and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth; giving him a good law to keep Gen. 2.17. But of the tree of knowledg of good and evil thou shalt not eat: telling him he should die if he kept it not, Gen. 2.17. In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.

II.

Secondly, that man broke that law and brought death upon himself and all his posteritie, Rom. 5.12. Wherefore as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed on all men, for that all have sinned.

III.

Thirdly, that no man can redeem himself from this death, Psalm 47.7. None of them can by any means redeem his brother, or give to God a ransom for him, Ephes. 2.8. For by grace are you saved through faith, and that not of yourselves.

IV.

That God out of his love sent his son into the world to be born of a woman, to die for the sins of all men under the first Covenant, Iohn 3.16. For God so loved the world. that he sent his only begotten Son etc. Gal. 4.4 God sent forth his son made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them under the law, Heb. 2.9. That he by the grace of God should taste death for every man, Heb. 9.15. That by means of death for the redemption of the transgressors, that were under the first Testament.

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V.

That he did do the will of his Father, in laying down his life for all sinners, Phil. 2.8. And being found in the fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, I Tim. 2.6, who gave himself a ransom for all

VI.

That he rose again from the dead the third day, and was seen bodily of his Disciples, Luke 24.6,7. He is not here but is risen; Remember how he spake to you when he was yet in Galilee, saying, that the third day he should rise again, Luke 24.39. Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself; hold me and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as you see I have.

VII.

That he ascended bodily into Heaven, Acts 1.9. While they beheld he was taken up, and a cloud received him out of their sight, Eph. 4.10 He that descended is the same also that ascended far above all Heavens.

VIII.

That he is now a Priest, a Prophet and a King, Heb.4.24. Seeing then that we have a great High-Priest that is passed into the Heavens, Jesus the Son of God, Acts 3.22. For Moses truly said unto the fathers, a Prophet shall the Lord our God raise up unto you Rev. 19. 16 And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

IX.

That he hath given down the Holy Spirit to his Servants, that they might make known to all Nations the things that concern the Name of Jesus and the Kingdom of Heaven Acts 2.4. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, 2 Cor. 3.6 Who hath also made us able ministers of the New Testament, not of the Letter but of the Spirit. Acts 28.31. And Paul dwelt two whole years in his hired house, and received all that came unto him, preaching the Kingdom of God and teaching those things which concerned the Lord Jesus Christ with all confidence.

X.

That all ought to believe the things declared by the Spirit Acts 17.30. And the times of this ignorance God winked at, but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent Rom. 16.26. But is manifested by the Scriptures of the Prophets and according to the commandment of the everlasting God made known to all Nations for the obedience of faith.

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XI.

That they that believe the things so preached ought to be dipped in water, Acts 10.47. Can any man forbid water that these should not be baptized (which in English is Dipped) which have received the Holy Spirit as well as we? Acts 10.46. He commanded them to be baptized in the Name of the Lord Iesus, Acts 2.38. Then Peter said unto them, Repent and be baptized every one of you in the Name of the Lord Iesus Christ. Acts 2.41. Then they that gladly received the word, were baptized, Acts 8.12. But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the Kingdom of God and the Name of Iesus Christ, they were baptized both men and women.

XII.

That God gives his Spirit to believers dipped through the prayer of faith and laying on of hands, Acts 8.15. When they were come down they prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit, Acts 8.17. Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit, Acts 1.8. We are witnesses of these things and so also is the Holy Spirit whom God hath given to those that obey him Ephes. 1.13,14.

XIII

That every believer dipped is to be joyned with believers dipped, which is the Church of Christ, Acts 2.41. Then they that gladly received the word were baptized, and the same day were added to the Church three thousand souls, I Cor. 12.13. For by one Spirit ye are all baptized into one bodie, I Pet. 2.5. Ye also are built up a spiritual house, Acts 2.42. And they continued stedfast in the Apostles Doctrine and fellowship and breaking bread, and prayer.

XIV.

That this company of believers dipped are subject to afflictions, 2 Tim. 3.12. Yea and all that will live godly in Christ Iesus shall suffer persecution, John 6.33. In this world you shall have tribulation.

XV,

That every one of them ought to be holy in life and conversation, 2 Cor. 7.1. Let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God, I Pet. 1.15. But as he which hath called you is holie, so be ye holie in all manner of conversation.

XVI.

That they ought to meet together to break bread, Acts 20.7. Upon the first day of the week the Disciples came together to break bread, Luke 2.19. Do this in remembrance of me, saith Christ.

XVII.

That they ought to be frequent in prayer, Rom. 12.12. Rejoycing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing instant in prayer, Ephes.

APPENDIX E

1.18. Praying always with all prayer and supplication in Spirit, and watching thereto with perseverance for all Saints, Luke 18.1: 21, 36.

XVIII.

That they ought to be obedient to the Magistrates in all things that are right, Rom. 13.1. Let every soul be subject to the higher powers, I Pet. 2.13.14. Submit yourselves to every Ordinance of man, for the Lords sake.

XIX.

That they ought to relieve the poor, that none want amongst them, except all want, they being diligent in their callings, Rom. 12.13. Distributing to the necessitie of the Saints, given to hospitalitie, Luke 3.11. He that hath two coats let him impart to him that hath none, and he that hath meat let him do so likewise.

XX.

That it is the dutie of every one to tell his brother of his sin, seeing him to offend, Matth. 18.15. Moreover if thy brother offend thee, go and tell him his between him and thee alone. Lev. 19.17. Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thy heart, but thou shalt rebuke thy neighbor, and not suffer sin to lie upon him.

XXI.

That they ought to cast out from among themselves all that walk disorderly, after admonition, they remaining obstinat, I Cor. 5.11. But now I have writ unto you, if any that is called a brother, be a fornicator, or covetous, or an adulterer, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner with such an one no not to eat I Cor. 5.13. Therefore put away from among your selves that wicked person, Titus 3.10. A man that is a heretick after the first and second admonition reject.

XXII.

That they have power to chuse Messengers, Pastors, and Teachers from among themselves, Acts 1. 21,22. Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Iesus went in and out amongst us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his Resurrection, Acts 1.26. They gave forth the lots, and the lot fell upon Matthias, and he was numbered among the eleven Apostles (which in English is Messengers) Titus 1.5. For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldst set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain Elders in every Church, as I have appointed thee, Acts 6.3. Wherefore brethren, look ye out among your selves seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, which we may appoint over this business.

XXIII.

That they are to be chosen by fasting and prayer, with the laying on

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of hands, Acts 16.3. And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away, Acts 6.6. Whom they set before the Apostles, and when they had prayed they laid their hands on them.

XXIV.

That the Church is to assist them in the work they appoint them to do, with things needful, I Cor. 9.14. The Lord hath appointed that they that preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel, Rom. 15.27. For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, their dutie is to minister unto them carnal things, Gal.6.6. Let him that is taught in the word, communicate to him that teacheth in all good things.

XXV.

That every member ought to exercise his gift for the benefit of others, Matth. 25.27. Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchange, that at my coming I might receive my own with usury, I Pet. 4.10. As every man hath received the gift, even to minister the same one to the other as good stewards of the manifold graces of God.

XXVI.

That all ought to avoid the hearing of any Teachers so as to learn of them, except believers dipped, and making of marriages with any out of the Church lest they be drawn from the truth, 2 Jno. 10 v.. If there come any unto you and bringeth not this Doctrine, receive him not into your house, nor bid him God speed, I Iohn 4.6. We are of God; he that knoweth God heareth us, and he that is not of God heareth not us, I Cor. 7.39. The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but her husband being dead, she is at liberty to marry whom she please, onely in the Lord, Deut. 7.3,4. Neither shalt thou make marriages with them, to wit, unbelievers; thy daughters thou shalt not give to his sons, neither shalt thou take his daughters to thy sons, for they will turn away thy sons from following me, 2 Cor. 6.14,15. Be not unequally yoked with unbelievers etc.

XXVII.

That Christ shall come personally to raise the just and unjust from the dead, Acts 1.11. This same Iesus which is taken up from you into Heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into Heaven Heb. 9.28. Unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation, I Cor. 15.22. For as by man came death, by man also came the Resurrection of the Dead; for as by Adam all died, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

XXVIII.

That he shall judg every one according to his work 2 Cor. 5.10. We must all appear before the Judgment-seat of Christ, that every one

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may receive the things done in his body according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad, Rom. 2.6. Who will render to every man according to his deeds.

XXIX.

Whosoever believeth and is dipped, and abideth in the Commandments to the end, shall be saved, Mark 16.16. He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved, Matth. 24.13. He that shall endure to the end shall be saved, Rev. 22.14. Blessed are they that do his Commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the Gates of the holie Citie.

XXX.

That whosoever believeth not and walketh not in the Commandments of God to the end, shall be forever cast out from the presence of God into everlasting punishment, which is the second death, Iohn 3.36. He that believeth not the Son, shall not see life, Matth. 25.30. Cast the unprofitable servant into utter darkness, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, Matth. 25.41. Then shall he say to them on the left hand, Depart from me ye cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels, Rev. 21.8. The fearful, and unbelieving, and abominable, and murderers, and whore-mongers, extortioners, and idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the Lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second Death.

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